HEIFA ODEH

creator of
Fufu's Kitchen

DINE IN Palestine

An Authentic Taste of Palestine in 60 Recipes
from My Family to Your Table

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Photography by Doaa Elkady

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To my roots

Introduction

MY JOURNEY

I've always been proud of my Palestinian identity. Even though I did not grow up in Palestine, it has always felt like home to me. It's a feeling I wish I could describe to you. A sense of belonging comes to mind when I think of my summers spent in beautiful Falasteen. Despite loving school, I always looked forward to summer breaks when we reunited with our family overseas, where a large majority of our extended family resided. There would be lots of hugs, kisses, smiles and food. Traditional Palestinian dishes like the beloved Musakhan (Roasted Chicken & Flatbread with Sumac, Olive Oil & Onions) and Dajaj Mahshi bil Freekeh (Chicken Stuffed with Freekeh) were cooked from the heart for us to enjoy. I remember the food tasting so much better than I was used to. The olive oil was so fresh that it would burn the back of your throat. Bread would be made daily on the taboon as the perfect addition to each meal. My uncle, who is a butcher, had a coop, so the chicken and eggs were always the best quality. It's no wonder I loved eating at their home. Or maybe it was how we all sat knee to knee on the floor on mattresses enjoying our meals family style. I wasn't used to that but I loved it. You see, food has always brought people together in my family. When we were visiting, every day—I kid you not—we would be invited by a different member in the village for either breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert or just coffee and tea. It's the norm and speaks to the generosity and yearning for community that Palestinians have.

Palestinians are very generous people. They would quite literally give you the shirts off their backs. They come from humble

beginnings and have seen their share of hardships living under occupation. But their resilience? Their resilience astonishes me. Despite their living situation, they go on with their lives and are appreciative of what they have. I'm always taught a life lesson or two when I visit. I have many memories from my time there: riding my grandfather's camel, going to the dukkan (neighborhood convenience store) daily and sitting on the baranda with my grandmother enjoying figs at dawn.

My parents are both from the same village in Palestine and are very proud of their heritage. That pride was instilled in their children. From a young age, I was enrolled in Sunday Arabic school to learn the language. It was the best gift my parents could've given me. Knowing how to read, write and speak in Arabic has given me a deeper connection to and understanding of my ethnicity. We also grew up enjoying a homemade Palestinian meal that was cooked daily by my mom. It was typical for us to have Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef) on a weeknight. My father also loved to cook and did so on the weekends, especially for breakfast when he would make the best Qalayet Bandura (Tomato Garlic Skillet)—his specialty.

Over the years, I understood and admired the significance of food and feeding others.

I started shadowing my mom in the kitchen in my early teens. My mom is an amazing cook; she is the eldest of six and the only girl in her immediate family. I could only imagine the responsibility she took on, and I can't help but believe it's one of the reasons she is so remarkable in the kitchen. Whether she knows it or not, she taught me so much of what I know. I would see that spark in her eyes when guests would tell her that the spread tasted just like it does back home and would lean in for seconds.

I have always loved creating and enjoying food. My first job was at a local bakery, where I stayed for ten years just because I loved it so

much. But it wasn't until my mid-twenties, when I got married and moved miles and miles away from my family, that I truly realized how important it was to preserve the food I grew up eating. The days I was homesick, which were many, I would call my mom and ask her how to make Makloubeh bil Khodra (Vegetarian "Upside Down" Spiced Rice Dish), Bamya (Okra Stew with Lamb & Vermicelli Rice), Knafeh (Sweet Cheese Pastry) and countless other dishes. I would quite literally stay on the phone for hours making these nostalgic meals with my mother's guidance. And if you know one thing about immigrant parents, it's that they never measure. Almost all of their cooking is done by using their senses. So, making these meals took some trial and error until they were perfected and reminiscent of home. To preserve my roots, I started to document these Palestinian recipes on a blog that I named Fufu's Kitchen after my childhood nickname, Fufu. It was my husband's fabulous idea to do so. Fast-forward two years down the line and it would become an award-winning blog, something I never thought would happen when I started. I've committed myself to this beautiful, vibrant cuisine. The aroma of cinnamon and allspice fills our home. The tank of olive oil, jars of tahini, za'atar and molasses fill my pantry. Fresh herbs, yogurt, garlic, onions and lemon are always stocked in my refrigerator.

I can't begin to explain the excitement I feel when I am in the kitchen, my element, preparing these nostalgic meals for my friends and family. It thrills me. Just like my mom, I am almost always thinking about the next meal I'll be making, as it brings true joy to me.

This book is a means of shining light on Palestinian cuisine's beauty and preserving it for you all to enjoy. This is me sharing a part of history and Palestinian identity, which I hold dear to my heart. Some dishes are inspired by the flavors of Palestine, while others are truly authentic recipes that have been passed down for generations. I am so humbled to be able to share a piece of me with you—not just my cooking, but my roots.

Heifa Odeh

An Authentic Breakfast

Ask me what my favorite meal is and I will tell you Sunday breakfast, but not just any breakfast—a feast of a traditional Palestinian breakfast. My parents would make it special every

time. I have so many beautiful memories in the kitchen with my family making these dishes that are a huge part of our cuisine. I looked forward to Sundays not only for the spectacular food, but also for the time spent learning more about my heritage and bonding with my parents.

My father, an avid gardener and lover of food, could be found making his garlic-forward tomato skillet and parsley-based fritters with so much care and love. In the summer, he would use fresh herbs and vegetables right from our garden, which truly made the food even more irresistible. My mother, a phenomenal cook and baker, would whip up the fluffiest dough stuffed with cheese and drizzled with honey for a touch of sweetness. And you cannot forget her homemade labneh with sesame bread. Everything was a savory harmony of good eats.

As you can see, my family influenced my love for the kitchen. Although I moved miles and miles away, it is in re-creating these recipes that I find the most joy. Creating a delicious Palestinian breakfast always brings back the most beautiful of memories. Here you will find a selection of some of my favorite morning dishes that I can easily enjoy at any time of the day. All of them are rich in flavor, colors and memories of home.

Fattet Hummus

TRADITIONAL LAYERED HUMMUS

Fattet Hummus is a statement Palestinian brunch dish that is hearty and satisfying. This dish has layers of texture and flavor, which is what makes it so popular. You will get crunchy, creamy, warm and cool, all in

one bite. The combination of garlic, lemon, yogurt and hummus is just sublime. It's a fantastic option for vegetarians, as it packs a healthy dose of protein and nutrients. Back home, this would typically be served on Fridays when most people are off from work and can enjoy a delicious spread for breakfast. Served fresh, it's as good as any you'd find in Palestine. So, get all the components ready and put together this fabulous Fattet Hummus.

Servings: 4-6

PITA CHIPS
3 pitas, cut into 2-inch (5-cm) triangles
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
1 tsp flaky salt
1 tsp cumin

YOGURT SAUCE
1½ cups (360 ml) plain yogurt
⅓ cup (80 g) tahini paste
2 fresh lemons, juiced
4 cloves garlic, minced
Salt, to preference
½ jalapeño, minced

HUMMUS
2 cups (328 g) chickpeas, cooked or canned, liquid reserved
1 clove garlic
1 tsp salt
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
1 lemon, juiced
2 tbsp (30 g) tahini paste
Pinch of cumin

GARNISH

2 tbsp (30 ml) ghee, melted

⅓ cup (43 g) toasted pine nuts

¼ cup (15 g) chopped fresh parsley

1 tbsp (6 g) sumac

Preheat the oven to 400˚F (204˚C). Add the pita triangles to a baking pan and drizzle them with 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of olive oil, 1 teaspoon of flaky salt and 1 teaspoon of cumin, and then bake for 10 minutes, until they are crisp. Set them aside to work on the rest of the components.

Next, make the yogurt sauce by mixing together the yogurt, ½ cup (80 g) of tahini paste, the juice from 2 lemons, 4 cloves of garlic, salt to preference and the minced jalapeño. Set this aside in the refrigerator.

Next, prepare the hummus by adding the chickpeas, a clove of garlic, 1 teaspoon of salt, 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of olive oil, the juice of 1 lemon, 2 tablespoons (30 g) of tahini paste and a pinch of cumin to a food processor and pulsing until the mixture is creamy and smooth. You will need the reserved chickpea liquid to make it creamy and to thin the hummus, so add that as needed while processing, reserving ¼ cup (60 ml) for the next steps. Set the hummus aside.

Microwave the chickpea liquid in 30-second intervals until it is warm to the touch. In a large, shallow serving dish, add the crisp pita chips and ladle a ¼ cup (60 ml) of warm chickpea liquid evenly on top of the pita chips. Spread the creamy hummus on top and then the yogurt on top of that. Drizzle the hot ghee on top, and then garnish with the toasted pine nuts, parsley and sumac. Grab a spoon and dig in!

Ka'ek El Quds

JERUSALEM SESAME BREAD

Nothing reminds me of Palestine more than these. They are a classic. You can find them in every bakery and piled high on the carts of street vendors in Jerusalem. I enjoyed so many on my trips overseas and love

to make them when I am missing those summer days in Palestine. They are fantastic as is and even better with some fresh cheese or labneh (strained yogurt) and a warm cup of mint tea. This bread is crisp on the outside and a tad chewy, yet fluffy, on the inside. The sesame topping offers a nutty crunch that is just divine.

Servings: 10

1½ cups (360 ml) lukewarm whole milk
1½ cups (360 ml) lukewarm water
2¼ tsp (7 g) fast-rising yeast
1½ tbsp (22 g) granulated sugar
6½ cups (891 g) bread flour, divided
1½ tbsp (27 g) salt
1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil, divided

TOPPINGS
1 tbsp (18 g) pomegranate molasses
2 tbsp (30 ml) hot water
1½ cups (216 g) sesame seeds

In a bowl, combine the lukewarm milk and lukewarm water with the yeast and sugar. Mix together very well and set it to the side for 5 minutes.

Add this wet mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer and attach the dough hook.

One cup (137 g) at a time, add 6 cups (822 g) of the bread flour to start, along with the salt, into the wet mixture, kneading it with the dough hook as you pour the flour.

If you do not own a stand mixer, you can do this in a bowl with your hands, but it will require a lot of muscle to knead the dough for a good 10 minutes.

Knead the dough in the mixer for 8 minutes until the dough comes together. If the dough is still sticky, add 2 tablespoons (18 g) of flour at a time and knead it for a few more minutes. Keep repeating until you have a smooth dough that is soft and pliable, but not sticking to your hands. If the mixture is too dry, add a little warm water.

Oil a bowl with a ½ tablespoon (7.5 ml) of olive oil, and then shape the dough like a ball and place it in the oiled bowl. Cover with a towel or foil and keep it in a warm spot for 1½ hours. The dough should double in size.

Add the other ½ tablespoon (7.5 ml) of olive oil to grease a baking pan. Once the dough is proofed, shape the dough into ten smaller balls and place them on the baking pan. Cover the dough and keep it in a warm spot for 40 minutes.

Combine the molasses, hot water and sesame seeds in a shallow dish for dipping the bread.

Next, let's shape each dough ball into a large bagel to proof one last time. Grab each ball of dough and use your thumb to make a hole in the center, and then stretch it out into an oval shape. Dip both sides into the sesame mixture and place it on a parchment-lined baking pan to proof for another 30 minutes, covered and in a warm spot. In the meantime, preheat the oven to 475˚F (246˚C).

Bake the Ka'ek El Quds for 10 to 12 minutes. The bread should be soft but slightly crisp on the outside. These are best enjoyed fresh and warm.

Mutabal with Seasoned Pita Chips

ROASTED EGGPLANT DIP

A cousin to the beloved hummus, this addictive smoky and creamy eggplant dip is a star. It is incredibly light but has depths of flavor from the roasted eggplant and garlic, and the lemon juice offers just the right

amount of acidity to brighten the dish. The best part is the smokiness achieved by blistering and charring the skin of the eggplant. It is the key to a fantastic mutabal. I pair this dip with crisp, homemade seasoned pita chips for a complete breakfast on its own—chips and dip Falasteeni Ftoor style.

Servings: 2-4

1 large eggplant
1 small head of garlic (8 cloves)
1 tsp salt, divided
¼ tsp pepper
½ tsp olive oil
2 tbsp (30 g) tahini
4 tbsp (60 ml) lemon juice, from approximately ½ lemon

PITA CHIPS
2 pitas
1½ tsp (3 g) sumac
½ tsp cumin
Dash of flaky sea salt
1½ tbsp (22 ml) olive oil

GARNISH
Olive oil
1–2 tbsp (3–8 g) fresh parsley, chopped, optional

First, preheat the oven to 400˚F (204˚C). While preheating, score the eggplant several times on all sides. This will allow the smoke to permeate through the eggplant for that charred flavor. To char the eggplant, place it on top of the gas stove burner on medium-high heat and char the entire outside of the eggplant until darkened and blistered, 10 to 15 minutes. Use a set of metal tongs to easily and safely turn the eggplant as it chars.

If you do not have a gas stove, try broiling on high heat to achieve a similar outcome but check on it frequently so it does not burn. While the eggplant is blistering, cut two pitas into pita chips, which are just small triangles or squares—whichever shape you decide. Use each half of the pita to do this, making the chips using four halves from two pitas.

Season the pitas with the sumac, cumin, salt and olive oil.

By this time, the oven should be preheated. Wrap the eggplant in aluminum foil and place on a baking sheet. On the same baking sheet, cut the top off a head of garlic and season the cloves with ¼ teaspoon of salt, pepper and the olive oil, and then cover it with aluminum foil as well.

Place the pita chips in a separate baking pan, making sure not to overlap them so they can get crisp.

Bake the eggplant and garlic for 40 minutes and the chips for 10 minutes, flipping the chips halfway through.

Set the chips aside when they are crisp.

When the eggplant finishes cooking, allow it to cool for about 10 minutes so that it is easy to work with. Cut off the stem and gently remove the skin.

Place the flesh of the eggplant in a food processor along with the roasted cloves of garlic, remaining salt, tahini and lemon juice. Pulse a few times, either until slightly textured or creamy; the texture is up to you!

For optimal flavor, place the mutabal in a bowl and refrigerate it for at least 4 hours, as this dip is best enjoyed chilled. Serve with the pita chips on the side. Dress the dip with olive oil and chopped parsley.

Qalayet Bandura

TOMATO GARLIC SKILLET

This simple Palestinian brunch staple is a favorite in our household. It is especially loved by my father, who not only enjoys making it for the family, but also eating it. He would make it often in the warmer months,

as we grew our own tomatoes and green chiles. You can expect an explosion of melt-in-your-mouth tomato and garlic flavor with a kick of heat! This skillet is often enjoyed with fresh pita bread for the perfect bite.

Servings: 2

2½ tbsp (37 ml) olive oil

5 cloves garlic, finely chopped

4 large tomatoes, cubed

½ jalapeño

Salt and pepper, to preference

Pita bread, for serving

To a skillet, add the olive oil followed by the minced garlic cloves. Cook on medium heat for 2 to 4 minutes, until the garlic becomes fragrant and lightly browned.

At this point, add in the tomatoes and toss with the olive oil and garlic. At first, they will appear chunky, but they will cook down and lose their structure.

For a little heat, add the jalapeño to the pan. Stir with the other ingredients and season with salt and pepper.

Allow all the flavors to cook together, covered, for 10 to 13 minutes on medium heat until the tomato chunks are broken down. Cook uncovered for another 2 to 5 minutes so it thickens slightly. Taste to see if any more seasoning is necessary, and enjoy this simple and delicious Palestinian dish with some fresh pita bread to dip.

Ijjeh

FLUFFY EGG & VEGGIE FRITTERS

This is one of those recipes in which you can utilize leftover vegetables in your refrigerator, chop them up and have a delicious, fluffy egg fritter as the end result. Ijjeh is known for including herbs, and the most prominent

and popular one is parsley. This dish is vibrant, colorful and bursting with flavor. It is a great change from the usual sunny-side up or scrambled eggs. My parents would often make this for Sunday brunch to fill us up until dinner. It is truly delicious.

Servings: 6

½ red onion, finely chopped

2 sprigs green onion, finely chopped

1 colored bell pepper, finely chopped

1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

½ jalapeño, deseeded, finely chopped

8 eggs, beaten

Salt and pepper, to preference

¼ cup (31 g) all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking powder

Vegetable oil, for frying

In a bowl, mix together the red and green onions, bell pepper, flat-leaf parsley, jalapeño, eggs, salt and pepper, flour and baking powder to make the batter.

To a skillet, add 2 teaspoons (10 ml) of oil over medium-high heat, and then using a ½-cup (120-ml) measuring cup, ladle the batter into the center of a 6-inch (15-cm) nonstick pan.

Typically, the oil will shift toward the outskirts of the pan, but to achieve crispy, fluffy fritters; the oil must hit the egg mixture's sides. So twirl the pan, allowing the oil to hit the edges of the eggs and veggies, and then let it cook for 2 minutes on each side until they are browned and fluffy. The fritters will be about 6 inches (15 cm) in diameter.

For the remainder of the fritters, keep adding oil to the skillet and repeating the previous step.

Enjoy the egg and veggie fritters warm.

Labneh Imdahbar

YOGURT BALLS PRESERVED IN OLIVE OIL

Labneh is strained yogurt that is very popular in the Middle East. You can find it in almost every Palestinian's refrigerator. Making your own labneh at home is worthwhile because it is a fun experience and tastes

better than store-bought options. For this variation, the whey is removed from the yogurt, which creates a thicker and more dense consistency that can easily be rolled into balls and then preserved in olive oil to be enjoyed. It is delicious as is, but even better when rolled in dried herbs or chili flakes. This with some fresh bread is all I need to be completely happy. I'm sure you will agree once you give it a try.

Makes: 24 yogurt balls

64 oz (1.9 L) plain whole milk yogurt
1 tsp (6 g) salt

FOR COATING
Dried mint
Red pepper flakes
Za'atar
Olive oil, for storage

Place the yogurt in a cheesecloth, wrap the top tightly and hang it from a faucet for 8 hours.

Then, place the cheesecloth in a sieve over a bowl, with a heavy object over the cheesecloth to press down the yogurt so that the liquid drains out. Do this for 24 hours.

The whole point of this process is to remove the excess liquid from the yogurt so that it becomes thicker. Once this is achieved, add salt to the strained yogurt and stir. The yogurt should be thick, creamy and tangy.

Rub some olive oil between your hands and shape the yogurt into tablespoon-sized (15-g) balls, about 1 inch (2.5 cm) in diameter.

Coat them in your favorite toppings, such as dried mint, red pepper flakes or za'atar, or keep them as is.

Store the labneh balls in an airtight jar, and then completely cover them with olive oil.

Keep the labneh balls refrigerated for up to 2 months fully submerged in olive oil. Enjoy!

Za'atar Cake with Olives & Halloumi

This savory cake encompasses all the beautiful flavors of a traditional Arabic za'atar flatbread, but in simple cake batter instead. You cannot have a Palestinian breakfast without zeit (olive oil) and za'atar on the table. The two are a glorious match, and in this cake, you will taste just

how well they complement one another. The oregano flavor and smell permeate throughout and the cheese melts just perfectly inside. The chopped olives, which are a Palestinian staple, add another element of flavor that accentuates the olive oil in the batter. All of these play a harmonious role in an authentic za'atar cake. You will find me enjoying a slice of this with mint tea in the mornings.

Makes: 10-12 slices

2 cups (480 ml) whole milk

2 eggs

1 cup (240 ml) olive oil

3 cups (375 g) all-purpose flour 1 tbsp (14 g) baking powder

½ tsp salt

1 cup (88 g) dried or fresh oregano or za'atar seasoning

1 tbsp (6 g) sumac

½ tbsp (8 g) red chili flakes

6 oz (170 g) halloumi or Arabic white cheese, cubed

3.6 oz (102 g) pitted black olives, roughly chopped

¼ cup (36 g) sesame seeds, for topping

Preheat the oven to 375˚F (191˚C). Prepare a 10-inch (25-cm) baking pan or 12-cup (2.9-L) tube pan with nonstick cooking spray.

In a large bowl, begin by mixing together the milk, eggs and olive oil very well. To this, go ahead and add the flour, baking powder, salt, za'atar, sumac and red chili flakes. The batter should appear creamy and smooth. Last, fold in the pieces of halloumi cheese and olives.

If using a tube pan, sprinkle the bottom of the pan with the sesame seeds before pouring in the batter. If using a 10-inch (25-cm) baking pan, pour the batter first, and then sprinkle the top with the sesame seeds.

Bake in the oven for 40 minutes, until the savory cake is just cooked through. Allow it to cool for at least 15 minutes before taking it out of the pan and slicing. The cake should be soft, moist and full of oregano and olive flavor.

Ful

FAVA BEAN DIP

Ful is a staple dish in many regions in the Middle East. Each country has its own take on this beloved vegan bean dip. In Palestine, we serve ful with lots of fresh garlic, lemon juice and olive oil. You will find the olive

oil dripping down your hands as you dip into ful. If you ask my dad, it is the only way to enjoy it. My favorite part of ful is the da 'ah, which is a jalapeño salsa topping that truly takes this recipe to another level of deliciousness.

Servings: 2-4

1 (15-oz [425-g]) can foul mudammas
1 tbsp (15 g) tahini paste
½ tsp cumin
Salt and pepper, to preference

DA'AH (JALAPEÑO SALSA)
1 small jalapeño
1 lemon, juiced
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
Salt, to preference

FOR SERVING
1 small tomato, diced, optional
Fresh pita, for serving
Olive oil, for serving

To a small pot, add the entire can of foul mudammas. Let this come to a simmer over medium heat for 2 to 4 minutes. Using a pestle or potato masher, mash these fava beans until they are no longer whole.

To this, add the tahini, cumin and a dash of salt and pepper. Stir this together and cook for another 2 to 4 minutes. Place this mixture in a dish that has edges so you can easily dip into it.

To prepare the topping, either pulse together the jalapeño, lemon juice, olive oil and garlic in a small food processor or mash them

with a mortar and pestle. Both techniques will work fine. Season with a little salt as well.

Top the ful with this salsa, which really elevates this dip to the Palestinian standard.

You may also garnish with the diced tomatoes to brighten it up. You can drizzle more olive oil if you prefer! Enjoy with fresh pita bread.

Bayd ou Batata

EGGS & POTATOES

What better duo is there than eggs and potatoes? This is my preferred Palestinian breakfast, as it is a combination of all my favorite flavor profiles. You will taste the delicious caramelized onions, fragrant garlic,

melt-in-your-mouth potatoes and fresh parsley in this recipe. It is also so simple to put together and truly can be enjoyed at any time of the day as a wholesome meal.

Servings: 2

3 tbsp (45 ml) olive oil

½ large yellow onion, finely chopped

3 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 large potato, peeled and finely chopped

Salt and pepper to season

5 eggs, beaten

Handful of parsley, finely chopped

To a large skillet, add the olive oil followed by the onion, garlic and potato. Season generously with salt and pepper.

Stir everything together very well over medium heat on the stovetop until fragrant and the potatoes start to crisp and tenderize. Keep the pan covered while cooking. This will take about 15 minutes.

At this point, mix together the beaten eggs and parsley. Sprinkle in some salt and pepper, and then go ahead and pour the egg mixture on top of the potato, onion and garlic. You can either cook this as an omelet or you can make it scrambled (imfarakeh). To keep it in omelet form, don't stir the eggs when adding them on top of the mixture. Just spread them evenly by rotating the pan to cover the components, and then let it cook until the omelet is ready. To speed up the process, cover the skillet with a lid.

For imfarakeh, simply scramble the eggs with the other components until they are cooked through.

Khaliat al Nahl

HONEYCOMB BREAD STUFFED WITH CHEESE

On the weekends, you would find my mom bright and early in the kitchen baking savory pies by the dozens for us to enjoy, and my go-to were always the ones stuffed with cheese. This honeycomb bread with

Yemeni roots is very reminiscent of that. Top off the fluffy baked bread with a beautiful honey glaze for a hint of sweetness to contrast with the slightly salty cheese and you have yourself a delightful and addictive bite. Let's just say that these will not last long and may just become your go-to baked pastry!

Servings: 3 dozen

2 cups (480 ml) lukewarm water
2¼ tsp (7 g) active dry yeast
2 tbsp (30 g) granulated sugar
5 cups (625 g) all-purpose flour, divided
½ cup (120 ml) olive oil
¼ cup (31 g) dry milk powder
1 tsp salt
1 tsp white vinegar
12 oz (340 g) cream cheese or feta, cubed
1 egg yolk
2 tbsp (30 ml) milk
¼ cup (36 g) black sesame seeds (plain work as well)
¼ cup (60 ml) honey

In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine the lukewarm water, yeast, sugar and 2 cups (250 g) of all-purpose flour, mixing everything together really well. Cover this with a towel or plastic wrap and keep it in a warm spot for 10 minutes.

Next, add the olive oil, remaining 3 cups (375 g) of flour, milk powder, salt and vinegar. Stir everything together very well and then, using a dough hook attachment, knead the mixture for 6 to 8 minutes until it comes together nicely as a dough. It should be smooth and not sticky. If it is sticky, add about 1 tablespoon (8 g) of flour at a time and knead again for 1 or 2 minutes until the desired consistency is reached.

Shape the dough into a ball and place it back in the bowl, now coated with olive oil. Cover this and allow it to proof for 30 minutes until it nearly doubles in size.

Preheat the oven to 375˚F (191˚C).

Then, form the dough into golf ball—sized (35- to 40-g) balls and stuff each with a cube of cheese. If you are keen to use a mixture of feta and cream cheese, then be my guest. They work great together but also work fine alone; cream cheese is the most commonly used option.

Place in a 12-inch (30-cm) cake pan with an inch (2.5 cm) of space between each ball. They will expand when baking and form a honeycomb shape. Beat together the egg yolk and milk to brush on top of the bread. Then, sprinkle the sesame seeds on top.

Bake for 25 minutes, or until they are golden brown and fluffy. Brush the honey on top as soon as they come out of the oven so it melts into the bread and enjoy warm or at room temperature.

Hummus bi' Lahmeh

HUMMUS TOPPED WITH STEAK

Almost any Arabic restaurant you go to will have hummus on the menu. Almost every grocery store you enter will carry this popular dip, too! It is the star of all Arab dips. Truth is, nothing ever beats homemade

hummus, as it is so easy to whip up this creamy chickpea dip. Actually, it was one of the first recipes my mom taught me to make at a young age. Chickpeas come in different forms, and either canned or dry can be used to make hummus. My mother always used canned chickpeas, as it was much faster to do so than soaking the dry chickpeas to use at a later time, so that is what my recipe calls for. Now, top it off with some flavorful tender meat and serve with warm, fresh bread and you have yourself a wonderful meal.

Servings: 2-4

FOR THE HUMMUS
1 (16-oz [454-g]) can chickpeas, liquid reserved
1 tsp salt
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
½ lemon, juiced
2 tbsp (30 g) tahini paste
¼ tsp cumin

FOR THE MEAT
½ lb (226 g) skirt steak, cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) cubes
Salt and pepper, to preference
½ tbsp (3 g) allspice seasoning
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil, divided

FOR SERVING
Chopped parsley
Toasted pine nuts
Olive oil
Fresh pita

To a food processor, add the chickpeas without the liquid from the can, but be sure to save the liquid, as a small portion will be used in

the recipe. Pulse the chickpeas a few times.

Add a teaspoon of salt, 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of olive oil, the lemon juice, tahini and cumin to the chickpeas and pulse together on low while drizzling in approximately ¼ cup (60 ml) of the drained chickpea liquid from the can. This will make the hummus creamier and not as thick while adding more chickpea flavor.

Plate this lovely hummus and set it aside for now.

In a bowl, season the skirt steak generously with salt and pepper. Add the allspice and 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of olive oil at this point as well. Mix everything together well before adding the meat to a skillet. Drizzle in the remaining olive oil and cook on medium-high heat for 5 to 8 minutes until the steak is cooked through and has a nice sear on all the edges.

Top off the hummus with the meat and garnish it with chopped fresh parsley, toasted pine nuts and a drizzle of olive oil. Serve with some fresh, warm pita bread and dig in.

For the Love of Vegetables

When I eat these dishes, I sometimes forget that they are vegetarian, as they have depths of flavor and texture in every bite. I especially think this when I am enjoying Makloubeh bil

Khodra, a popular and versatile seasoned rice dish made with eggplant, potatoes and cauliflower. In fact, Palestinian cuisine consists of many vegetable-forward meals. Vegetables are the foundation for some of the most loved recipes in our cuisine. Because Palestine is an occupied land, many people lead humble lives and enjoy the simplicity of vegetables and grains as they have for many years. The prices are lower for these goods, but what Palestinians can do with them is so spectacular that you will not long for meat or fish.

The people of Palestine are also resourceful and will use one vegetable in many ways. My grandmother taught me how to make the most delicious zucchini garlic dip with scraps of zucchini left over from coring them before being stuffed. Nothing ever went to waste. In this book, eggplant alone is used in many applications such as a dip in Mutabal, as a star in Imsaka'a bil Khodra (Vegetarian Moussaka) and on its own with a spicy acidic salsa.

Some of the recipes can be seen as incredible sides while others can be a dinner centerpiece on their own. You will find the use of grains such as bulgur and freekeh celebrated in our cuisine too, like in the Salatat Freekeh (Freekeh Salad) or Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol (Stuffed Peppers with Bulgur & Herb Yogurt) in this chapter. Frankly, you can write an entire book just on the variety of vegetarian dishes in the Middle East.

Makloubeh bil Khodra

VEGETARIAN “UPSIDE DOWN” SPICED RICE DISH

Makloubeh is often served on special occasions like Eid, Ramadan and family gatherings. I absolutely love including a combination of eggplant, potatoes and cauliflower in mine. The rice itself is fragrant with notes of

cumin and cinnamon and the vegetables are perfectly caramelized and tender. All these components together make for a magnificent bite that will keep you going back for more.

Servings: 6

FOR THE RICE

2½ cups (500 g) white rice

1 tsp allspice

1 tsp seven spice

1 tsp garlic powder

½ tsp turmeric

½ tsp cumin

½ tbsp (9 g) salt

1 tsp pepper

Vegetable stock

FOR THE VEGETABLES

1 head cauliflower, cut into florets

1 large potato, peeled and sliced into 1½-inch (3-cm)-thick rounds

¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil

2 large eggplants, peeled and sliced into 1½-inch (3-cm)-thick rounds

Salt and pepper, to preference

2 tomatoes, sliced 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick

FOR SERVING

⅓ cup (36 g) slivered almonds, toasted

¼ cup (15 g) fresh parsley, chopped

Plain yogurt, optional

Jerusalem Salad, optional

First, soak the rice in water for 15 minutes to remove the excess starch. Then, drain the water and season with the allspice, seven spice, garlic powder, turmeric, cumin, salt and pepper. Stir it all together very well and set to the side as you work on the vegetable component of the dish.

Preheat the oven to 400˚F (204˚C). In a large bowl, toss the cauliflower and potato with the olive oil. Then, add the eggplant to this and season with salt and pepper. Toss everything in the oil completely. We add the eggplant last so it does not soak up too much oil.

Lay out the vegetable slices flat onto nonstick baking sheets. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes on each side until they are tender. Alternatively, you can fry these vegetables in batches, but roasting is my preference.

Time to assemble the pot! Lightly oil a deep pot and arrange the tomato slices at the bottom of the pot. Scatter a handful of rice over the tomatoes, then layer all the vegetables. Finally, add the remainder of the rice on top of the vegetables for an even layer.

Add enough vegetable stock to cover the rice by 1 inch (2.5 cm). Add a heatproof plate that fits in the pot over the rice. This keeps all the components of the dish in place as the rice boils and cooks. Cover with a lid and let this simmer for approximately 30 minutes, until the rice has absorbed all the liquid. Makloubeh does not require stirring; the rice should take the shape of the pot.

Leave this to cool slightly and remove the lid. Then, place a plate larger than the pot on top and carefully turn everything over to flip the makloubeh onto the serving plate. Tap the bottom of the pot before slowly lifting it up and revealing this beautiful cake of rice! Garnish with toasted slivered almonds and chopped parsley. This is best served with plain yogurt and a simple salad!

Imsaka'a bil Khodra

VEGETARIAN MOUSSAKA

This is a go-to vegetarian recipe when I want to divert from the traditional moussaka that involves ground beef. You will not miss the meat with all these gorgeous vegetables. They come together beautifully

to create such a mouthwatering and addictive bite. The eggplants add meatiness while the onions, tomatoes and jalapeño bring loads of flavor. My husband, who isn't a fan of vegetarian meals, absolutely loves this dish, especially with fresh bread in hand. This is best enjoyed at room temperature or cold, hence the name "imsaka'a," which translates to "cold" in Arabic. That way, the flavors are more pronounced.

Servings: 4

2 eggplants, cut into chunks
1 cup (240 ml) vegetable oil or frying oil of choice
1 red onion, chopped in chunks
1 yellow onion, chopped
1 jalapeño, sliced in half
1 head of garlic, peeled and cloves cut in half
Salt and pepper, to preference
6 tomatoes, cubed
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1 tsp allspice
1 cup (240 ml) tomato purée diluted with ½ cup (120 ml) water
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil

FOR SERVING
Fresh pita
Vermicelli Rice
Parsley, chopped, optional

Fry the eggplants in your desired frying oil for 5 to 10 minutes, or until they are golden brown. Set them to the side.

In the remainder of the oil, add the onions, jalapeño and garlic and cook for 5 minutes, until the components are fragrant and lightly golden brown. Season with salt and pepper.

Then, add the tomatoes and bell pepper to fry. Season again with salt, pepper and allspice.

Toss in the tomato purée and stir to cook for 5 minutes.

Place all of this, including the eggplant, in a 9 × 13—in (23 cm × 33—cm) baking pan.

Drizzle with the olive oil and bake in a 400°F (204°C) oven for 40 minutes, until the consistency of the moussaka appears thicker.

Taste and sprinkle with more salt if needed and enjoy it warm with pita bread or Vermicelli Rice. Feel free to garnish with chopped parsley!

Salata Baladia

TOMATO & ONION TAHINI SALAD

A satisfying, creamy salad that is often made in our village in Palestine for its simplicity and deliciousness. It pairs beautifully with proteins or on its own with some rice.

Servings: 4

¼ cup (60 g) tahini paste

½ lemon, juiced

2 tbsp (30 ml) water

½ jalapeño, deseeded, finely chopped

3 tomatoes, chopped

½ large red onion, finely chopped

1 tsp salt

In a bowl, combine the tahini, lemon juice and water, and mix together until a dressing-like consistency is reached. If desired, thin the dressing more by adding a teaspoon of water at a time until it reaches your desired consistency.

Toss the jalapeño, tomatoes and onion with the dressing and season the salad with salt. This is best enjoyed cold after sitting in the refrigerator, covered, for 1 hour so all the flavors come together. I've enjoyed this salad on falafel sandwiches and with a Kufta Tart; it is super delicious.

Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol

STUFFED PEPPERS WITH BULGUR & HERB YOGURT

In Palestinian cuisine, bulgur can often be found as a substitute for rice. Bulgur, which is a wheat, actually contains more health benefits than rice, as it is high in fiber and other nutrients. Often, my mom would

make a side of bulgur to go with mashawi (Arabic grilled meats). I have also used bulgur in salad, as it just takes on flavors so beautifully. In this recipe, the bulgur is flavored with tomato and pomegranate molasses, then used to stuff peppers, and then gets topped with a complementary yogurt sauce to tie it all together. It makes for such a wonderful vegetarian meal.

Servings: 3

3 small red bell peppers, halved lengthwise and deseeded
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil, divided
Salt and pepper, to preference
1 yellow onion, finely chopped
6 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup (140 g) bulgur, coarse
2 cups (480 ml) vegetable stock
½ tsp seven spice
1 vegetable bouillon cube, crushed
1 tbsp (16 g) tomato paste
½ tsp pomegranate molasses

HERB YOGURT
1 cup (240 ml) plain yogurt
Handful chopped parsley
½ tbsp (3 g) dried mint
½ lemon, juiced
Salt, to preference
1 clove garlic, minced

Preheat the oven to 375˚F (191˚C). Prepare the bell peppers by coating them thoroughly in 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of olive oil. Season them with salt and pepper. Add them to an oiled baking pan and bake for 40 minutes, flipping them once halfway into baking.

Mix the yogurt together with the chopped parsley, dried mint, lemon juice, salt and garlic, and then cover and refrigerate.

In a pot, add 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of olive oil along with the onion and garlic. Season with salt and pepper, and then let everything cook down for a few minutes until the mixture is fragrant and lightly caramelized.

To this, add the bulgur, vegetable stock, seven spice, bouillon cube and tomato paste. Stir and let this cook together covered for 15 minutes, until all the liquid has been absorbed. Drizzle in the pomegranate molasses and fluff the bulgur.

At this point, the peppers should be cooked. Fill each pepper with the bulgur and enjoy with a side or topping of the herb yogurt!

Imshat

CAULIFLOWER FRITTERS

A perfect recipe for enjoying both your vegetables and eggs in one dish. The fritter is fluffy and full of cauliflower, onion and herb flavors. This

traditional recipe is often served in the winter as a warm, comforting side or brunch dish.

Servings: 12

2 tsp (4 g) cumin, divided
1 large cauliflower, cut into florets
4 cloves garlic
½ cup (30 g) parsley
1 yellow onion
5 eggs
1 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper
1 tsp chili powder
1½ cups (188 g) all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 cup (240 ml) vegetable oil

Fill a large pot halfway with water, add 1 teaspoon of cumin to the water and bring to a boil. Once it comes to a boil, add in the cauliflower florets and boil for 8 to 10 minutes. Then, drain the liquid and place the cooked florets in a food processor. Pulse for a few seconds until the florets are small chunks. Remove the florets and set them aside.

In the same food processor, add the garlic, parsley and onion. Pulse together for a few seconds until everything is well chopped.

In a bowl, whisk together the eggs and the chopped mixture. Add the remaining teaspoon of cumin, the salt, pepper and chili powder and give a quick stir. Add the cauliflower to this egg mixture along with the flour and baking powder. Mix this together very well to ensure that the batter is ready to be fried.

To a frying pan, add the vegetable oil on medium heat and, using a ladle, drop the batter into the oil and let this fry for 2 to 3 minutes on each side until the fritters are golden brown and cooked through. Depending on the size of the pan, you can do a few at a time. Then, let the excess oil drain by placing these fritters on a paper towel or wire rack. Enjoy them warm or at room temperature.

Tabeekh Sabanekh

SPINACH STEW

Growing up, my mother would do her best to make dishes that were wholesome for our family. One of the ways that she would make us eat our greens was by putting spinach in plenty of our foods. Like most

children, my brothers and I weren't fans of spinach, let alone a stew made of spinach. However, as we grew, we appreciated this iron-dense meal more and more, and now I make it when I am feeling under the weather to give me a little boost.

Servings: 4

2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
1 white onion, finely diced
8 cloves garlic, crushed
2 vegetable bouillon cubes
28 oz (794 g) frozen chopped spinach, defrosted and drained
2 cups (328 g) canned chickpeas, drained
2½ cups (600 ml) water
1 tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper

FOR SERVING
1½ cups (279 g) Vermicelli Rice
1 lemon, cut into wedges

To a pot, add in the olive oil, along with the onion and garlic. Allow this to cook on medium heat until the onion and garlic are fragrant and lightly caramelized.

To this, add the bouillon cubes by crushing them over the top of the onion and garlic to cook together.

Then, add the spinach along with the chickpeas and water to the pot. Season with salt and pepper and allow this stew to cook together on low to medium heat, covered, for 30 minutes.

Serve with Vermicelli Rice and wedges of lemon for a complete meal.

Salatat Freekeh

FREEKEH SALAD

Salatat freekeh is a simple dish with loads of flavor. Freekeh is a young green wheat that is packed with nutritional value. It is often used in Palestinian cooking as a variation of rice to enjoy on its own, in a soup,

as a stuffing, or in this case, in a wonderful salad. You will find the nuttiness and texture of the freekeh contrasts beautifully with the vibrant vegetables and tangy dressing. The combination will surely be memorable.

Servings: 2-4

1 cup (190 g) coarse cracked freekeh
1½ cups (360 ml) water
1 vegetable bouillon cube, crushed
Handful of flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
2 handfuls of baby arugula
½ red onion, finely chopped
1 red bell pepper, finely chopped

DRESSING
¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil
½ tsp salt
1 tbsp (18 g) pomegranate molasses
1 tbsp (6 g) dried mint
1 lemon, juiced
3 cloves garlic, crushed
½ tsp red chili flakes

Boil the freekeh in a pot with salted water and the crushed bouillon cube, and then bring it down to a simmer while covered for 25 minutes until the water is completely evaporated and the grain is cooked through. Set this aside to slightly cool.

In the meantime, make the dressing by gathering the olive oil, salt, pomegranate molasses, dried mint, lemon juice, garlic and chili flakes into a bowl and whisking everything together. Set this aside.

After the freekeh has cooled slightly for 15 to 20 minutes, add the flat-leaf parsley, baby arugula, red onion, pepper and dressing to it. Toss everything very well. Place the salad in your desired serving dish to be enjoyed. Sprinkle with a tad more salt and serve at room temperature or cold. The salad should be refreshing, hearty and tangy!

Fasulya bil Zeit

GREEN BEANS IN OLIVE OIL

You'll find many variations to fasulya across the Middle East. In Palestine, we eat green beans often, and you can almost always find beautiful, vibrant green beans in your local market during the spring and

summer season. A recipe my mother would often make would be this simple dish of sautéed green beans in olive oil and garlic. It always made for the perfect side dish to a dinner and is an excellent way to get more vegetables into a meal.

Servings: 4

2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
10 cloves garlic, sliced in half
1 large onion, chopped
1 lb (454 g) green beans, cut in half and both ends trimmed
3 tomatoes or 15 oz (425 g) cherry tomatoes, chopped
1 jalapeño, halved
¾ cup (180 ml) water
1 tsp salt, divided
¼ tsp pepper

FOR SERVING
Fresh pita
Rice

First, add the olive oil to a pot and sauté the garlic and onions until they are fragrant and lightly caramelized, which takes 5 minutes.

Then, add the green beans, tomatoes and jalapeño halves. Season with ½ teaspoon of salt and stir all of this together for a few minutes.

Go ahead and add the water and let this all simmer together with the pot covered for 30 to 40 minutes, until the beans are tender. Uncover the last 5 to 10 minutes to reduce the liquid and season with the remaining salt and pepper.

This should be enjoyed at room temperature as is or with some fresh pita and/or rice (here).

Arnabeet

CAULIFLOWER BITES WITH TAHINI SAUCE

I cannot make this dish and not think of my father, who absolutely loves this recipe. He is a huge vegetable fan like me. Traditionally, the cauliflower is fried, but I have always favored roasted vegetables over

frying. It keeps the dish lighter and offers a beautiful dimension in flavor. The tahini sauce drizzle adds a tangy, creamy note to the caramelized cauliflower bites. The pine nuts offer crunch, while the parsley and lemon add freshness. Believe me—this is one delicious vegan bite.

Servings: 2-4

1 large cauliflower head, cut into florets
3 tbsp (45 ml) olive oil
2 tsp (12 g) salt
½ tsp pepper
1 tbsp (6 g) sumac

TAHINI DIP
2 tbsp (30 g) tahini paste
½ lemon, juiced
¼ tsp salt
2 tbsp (30 ml) water

GARNISH
2 tbsp (16 g) pine nuts, toasted
Small handful of chopped parsley
Pinch of sumac
Lemon wedge, optional

Preheat the oven to 375˚F (191˚C). In the meantime, toss the cauliflower with the olive oil, salt, pepper and sumac. Make sure all the florets are coated evenly.

Spray a baking pan with nonstick spray and evenly scatter the florets onto the baking pan. Avoid overcrowding the pan so that each floret can become nicely caramelized while roasting. Bake for 40 minutes, flipping them halfway through the baking process so that both sides get some nice color.

While the florets are baking, stir together the tahini paste, lemon juice, salt and water for the tahini dip. The tahini sauce should have a drizzly consistency. If it is too thick, add a teaspoon of water at a time to thin it out.

Once the cauliflower is beautifully roasted and tender, generously drizzle tangy tahini sauce over the top.

Last, garnish the cauliflower bites with the toasted nuts, parsley and a sprinkle of sumac. Serve with a lemon wedge for some added brightness, if desired. Enjoy this warm or at room temperature!

Sabanekh ou Jibneh Sambousak

SPINACH & CHEESE ROLLS

Spinach and cheese complement one another so well. These rolls are the perfect make-ahead treat to keep in the freezer for whenever you are looking for a snack or an appetizer. Often, we prepare these for

Ramadan ahead of time as a side to enjoy when breaking our fast. Everyone loves these! They are crisp on the outside, creamy and full of flavor on the inside and overall, so simple to make.

Servings: 16

8 oz (226 g) cream cheese, room temperature

8 oz (226 g) creamy feta cheese

16 oz (454 g) white Arabic cheese, or halloumi, crumbled

1 tsp red pepper flakes

1 (14-oz [397-g]) package frozen chopped spinach, defrosted and drained

1 (16-oz [454-g)]) package medium-sized egg roll wraps or spring roll pastry

Vegetable oil, for frying

PASTE

2 tbsp (16 g) all-purpose flour

2 tbsp (30 ml) water

In a bowl, stir together the cheeses, red pepper flakes and spinach until you are left with a creamy, well-mixed filling. In a separate bowl, mix the flour and water together to form a paste.

Spoon about 2 tablespoons (30 g) of the filling onto the pastry in the shape of a log going down one of the sides or edges. Roll to cover the filling once over and then tuck in both ends and continue rolling. Once you reach the end, seal it with a little bit of the paste.

Once sealed, drop the rolls into a Dutch oven, shallow pot or fryer with hot oil to fry for 2 to 4 minutes, until they are golden brown. The rolls should sizzle as soon as they touch the oil. Place on a rack or paper towel—lined plate to drain the excess oil. Enjoy it warm!

Tip: *To freeze these, stuff and shape the rolls, then place them flat in a Ziploc bag and in the freezer. Whenever you're craving some, just let them defrost for 5 to 10 minutes and then fry until golden brown!*

Muthawamet Kousa

ZUCCHINI, GARLIC & YOGURT DIP

Makes: 2-3 cups

3 zucchini, cut into cubes, or flesh of 15 zucchini

Salt, to preference
½ jalapeño, chopped
5 cloves garlic, chopped
1 lemon, juiced
⅓ cup (80 ml) plain yogurt
2 tbsp (30 g) tahini paste
2 tsp (4 g) dried mint, divided

FOR SERVING
1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
Pita bread
Crackers
Sliced vegetables

It wasn't until my grandma Nofa came to stay with us in the States for a few months that I knew of this dish. I instantly loved it, probably because it had all my favorite things like squash, mint, yogurt and, best of all, lots of garlic. She would always make this when she had leftover scraps of zucchini from making Mahshi, which is stuffed squash. Instead of letting the innards go to waste, she would transform them into this beautiful, tasty dip. Making this takes me to those days in the kitchen with her. This is now a beloved dip in our home, especially when we have leftover zucchini. There is no doubt that we will be making this exact dish.

Place the cubed zucchini into a large nonstick skillet and cook on medium heat with a sprinkle of salt. Cook, covered, for 20 minutes, stirring every now and then. If you notice the zucchini is sticking to the pan and charring, then go ahead and add 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of water to the pan while it cooks. Once the zucchini is tender, drain off any excess moisture.

If using just the innards or flesh of zucchini, then it will cook in about half the time, as it is softer to start with. Make sure to drain it well, as it also has more moisture.

Place the jalapeño, garlic, fresh lemon juice and salt into a small food processor to create a salsa/sauce by pulsing it all together. Alternatively, you can mash the garlic and jalapeño, and then add lemon juice to that using a mortar and pestle.

Mash the zucchini and mix it with the salsa ingredients, yogurt and tahini. Stir everything together.

Season with salt and a teaspoon of dried mint, and then give it one last stir. Garnish with olive oil and the rest of the mint. Enjoy at room temperature or cold with pita bread, crackers or vegetables for dipping.

Tabbouleh

PARSLEY & BULGUR SALAD

This Levantine vegetarian salad made mostly of finely chopped parsley and fine bulgur is very popular across the Middle East. It is often served alongside a meal or as an appetizer. It is very fresh and light, yet hearty.

My mom would make it for us often during the holy month of Ramadan. Although a bit tedious to make due to needing to finely chop all the vegetables, it is well worth the end result! It tastes even better the next day when all the juices settle together, so always make extra.

Servings: 6

¼ cup (35 g) fine bulgur
1½ lemons, juiced
⅓ cup (80 ml) olive oil
2 bunches flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
6 sprigs green onions, finely chopped
5 tomatoes, finely chopped
1 tbsp (6 g) dried mint
1 tsp salt

In a bowl, mix the fine bulgur with the lemon juice and olive oil. Let this sit together until the bulgur absorbs the liquid and expands in size and softens. It is important to use fine bulgur, which is small in size, as opposed to larger-sized bulgur for this salad. All the components in tabbouleh are meant to be small, and bulgur will enlarge when immersed in a liquid.

In a large bowl, toss together the parsley, green onions and tomatoes very well. Once the bulgur is ready, add this to the mixture. Sprinkle the dried mint and salt over the top and stir. Taste and adjust with lemon, olive oil or salt as needed. This tastes best at least 4 hours after making. Enjoy this cold and keep leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator. It tastes even better the next day when the flavors have melded together.

Tip: *When handling the parsley, wash and dry it the evening before so it isn't wet when it is time to finely chop it. This makes a big difference in texture and makes knife cuts easier.*

Baitinjan Maklee ma' Da'ah

FRIED EGGPLANT WITH SALSA

These eggplant bites melt in your mouth. They are packed with flavor and so simple to make. The da'ah on top really takes this simple fried eggplant to another level. The jalapeño adds heat while the lemon has

some acidity that just pairs so well here. Enjoy these stuffed into a pita or as a vegetable side dish.

Servings: 2-4

2 eggplants, peeled and cubed

½ cup (120 ml) vegetable oil, for frying

DA'AH

½ jalapeño, chopped

1 lemon, juiced

2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil

4 cloves garlic, chopped

Salt and pepper, to preference

In a Dutch oven or pot, fry the eggplant in the vegetable oil for just a few minutes until it is browned and cooked through. You can do this in two batches so as to not overcrowd the pot.

In the meantime, in a mini food processor, add the jalapeño, lemon juice, olive oil and garlic. Process until a salsa-like consistency is reached. We call this da'ah. You can also achieve this with a mortar and pestle. Then, season to preference with salt and pepper. Either keep the salsa cold and top it with the hot eggplant pieces or sauté the salsa by itself for a few minutes, and then top the eggplant to make both components warm.

The Land & Sea

The Palestinian diet includes lots of vegetables, plenty of chicken, lamb, beef and fish. You can say that it is well rounded and our land and sea have so much to offer. Chicken is

the most widely used, followed by lamb, beef and seafood. Chicken, the least expensive of them all, is what you will commonly find Palestinian families eating on a day-to-day basis. In fact, Musakhan (Roasted Chicken & Flatbread with Sumac, Olive Oil & Onions), the national dish, is topped with oven-roasted, sumac-flavored pieces of chicken.

However, lamb that has been cooked for hours on end until it is fall-off-the-bone tender has to be my favorite. The flavor of lamb is distinct and allows for our cuisine to shine. I personally love it. You will find that beef is a widely used substitute for lamb that doesn't compromise on flavor. Some recipes, like the Kufta Tart and Kousa Mahshi, taste even better with ground beef.

You will find seafood dishes are more popular in areas like Yafa and Gaza, which are right by the water. I've had the pleasure of going to Yafa and enjoying some of the best seafood I have ever had. In fact, the Pomegranate Molasses & Harissa Salmon with Arugula Salad in this chapter is inspired by my travels there.

As you can see, Palestinian cuisine is versatile and there is a little something for everyone.

Musakhan

ROASTED CHICKEN & FLATBREAD WITH SUMAC, OLIVE OIL & ONIONS

Servings: 10-12

CARAMELIZED ONIONS

10 large yellow onions, diced

2 cups (480 ml) olive oil

½ tbsp (3 g) cumin

⅓ cup (32 g) sumac

Salt, to preference

½ tsp pepper

ROASTED CHICKEN

3 lemons, juiced

2 tbsp (30 ml) white vinegar

1 tbsp (18 g) salt

4 (3-lb [1.4-kg]) whole chickens, cut in half

MARINADE

¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil

1 lemon, juiced

Salt and pepper, to preference

1½ tbsp (9 g) allspice

2 tbsp (12 g) all-purpose poultry seasoning

⅓ cup (32 g) sumac

FOR SERVING

6 tbsp (36 g) sumac

6 thick, 12-in (30-cm) round flatbreads, taboon bread, gyro-style or naan

Handful of chopped parsley

½ cup (53 g) toasted almond halves

Plain yogurt

Jerusalem salad

Musakhan is Palestine's national dish and once you try it, you will look forward to making it again and again. There are layers of flavors to this

meal. The caramelized sumac onions that top the fluffy flatbread known as taboon with the tender roasted chicken is just divine. When my mom would make this, we would dive in! No cutleries, just our hands ripping the bread with pieces of chicken and often dipping it in yogurt for the perfect bite. You will find that the sumac and olive oil, which are staple Palestinian ingredients, are the stars of this mouthwatering dish. Musakhan is not only vibrant in flavor, but color as well, and makes for a showstopping meal.

In a large pot, mix the diced onions with the olive oil. Cover and cook on medium heat while sporadically stirring so as to not burn the bottoms. The onions will start to soften. This can take 20 to 30 minutes.

While the onions are softening, combine the juice from three lemons, vinegar and salt and let the chicken halves soak in this for 10 minutes or so before rinsing them off and patting them dry.

Now, make the chicken marinade by mixing together ¼ cup (60 ml) of olive oil, the juice from 1 lemon, salt, pepper, allspice, all-purpose poultry seasoning and ⅓ cup (32 g) of sumac until it looks sauce-like. Add all the chicken halves to a lightly oiled baking pan. Then, completely coat them with the chicken marinade.

Cover the chicken with foil and bake in a 420˚F (215˚C) oven for 1½ hours. The chicken is cooked once it reaches an internal temperature of 165˚F (74˚C).

At this point, the onions should be very soft and translucent. Now, add the cumin, ⅓ cup (32 g) of sumac, salt and pepper, as desired. Let this simmer together for 10 minutes, and then drain and reserve the olive oil from the onions, which will be used shortly. Taste and adjust the salt if needed and then set the onions aside.

Take out the thick flatbread you will be using for the dish. If you have access to taboon bread, it would be perfect for this. First, oil the bread evenly with the drained oil. Then, top with the cooked

onions evenly. Then, sprinkle 1 tablespoon (6 g) sumac on each flatbread evenly. Repeat with the other flatbreads.

Broil the flatbreads in the oven for 2 minutes until they are lightly crisped.

To assemble, top the flatbreads with the cooked chicken, a garnish of parsley and toasted almonds. Enjoy with plain yogurt and Jerusalem salad, such as the recipe used in the Kufta Tart dish.

Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice

Lamb is such an integral part of Middle Eastern cuisine. In Palestine, it is quite expensive, so it is often bought for celebrations as opposed to

regularly, although it is still popular. These lamb shanks melt in your mouth—that is how incredibly tender and delicious they are. The turmeric rice with the nuts and raisins is the perfect accompaniment to the lamb. This is a meal made to impress, no doubt about that.

Servings: 4

LAMB

2 lamb shanks

Salt and pepper, to preference

¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil

½ lemon, juiced

1 tbsp (16 g) tomato paste

1 tbsp (15 g) shatta (chili paste)

1 tsp paprika

1 tsp garlic powder

1 tsp onion powder

2 tbsp (11 g) dried oregano

1 tsp allspice

2 tbsp (30 ml) vegetable oil, for searing

VEGETABLES

1 onion, diced into chunks

6 cloves garlic

3 carrots, diced

BRAISING LIQUID

1 (14-oz [414-ml]) can crushed tomatoes

2 cups (480 ml) vegetable or beef stock

1 tbsp (5 g) dried oregano

TURMERIC RICE

2 cups (400 g) white long-grain rice

4 cups (960 ml) water
1 tsp salt
1 tsp ground turmeric
1½ tbsp (21 g) ghee, divided
¼ cup (32 g) pine nuts
¼ cup (36 g) golden raisins

First, generously season the lamb shanks with salt and pepper.

Next, mix together the olive oil, lemon juice, tomato paste, shatta, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, 2 tablespoons (11 g) of oregano and allspice in a bowl and top the lamb shanks with the marinade. Rub the lamb well with this mixture. Then, place the lamb in a 9 × 11—inch (23 × 28—cm) baking pan. Marinate for at least 4 hours or ideally overnight.

Sear the lamb in a pan with 2 tablespoons (15 ml) of vegetable oil for 2 minutes on each side until it has browned nicely.

Add the onion, garlic and carrots to the baking dish that the lamb was marinated in and mix the vegetables around in the marinade. Add the seared lamb shanks back into the baking pan with the vegetables.

To this, add the crushed tomatoes and stock with the oregano. Make sure the braising liquid is well spread out.

Cover the pan with aluminum foil and bake at 350˚F (177˚C) for 4 hours in the oven.

In the meantime, place the rice and water in a pot and bring to a boil. To this, add the salt, turmeric and 1 tablespoon (14 g) of ghee. Stir and let it simmer on low to medium heat covered for 15 to 20 minutes, until it is fluffy.

In a pan on low heat, sauté together the pine nuts and golden raisins in the remaining ghee until they are lightly toasted and the raisins are plump. Go ahead and incorporate the raisins and nuts into the rice or on top as garnish.

Remove the foil from the baking pan and spoon the excess sauce over the top of the lamb. Serve the lamb shanks either on top of or next to the turmeric rice for a delicious meal.

Za'atar-Spiced Tilapia with Lentil Salad

I believe za'atar makes everything better, including tilapia. Za'atar is a spice mixture that includes the herb za'atar along with sumac and sesame

seeds. It is common in many Palestinian dishes, especially when mixed with olive oil as a lovely paste. It truly adds so much flavor to the tilapia and pairs beautifully with a light and refreshing lentil salad. Lentils are often used in our cuisine too, for different purposes. Orange lentils are commonly used in shorbat adas (lentil soup), while brown lentils are used here, cooked whole for a wonderful addition to a salad. The whole meal is just vibrant, both in color and in taste.

Servings: 3

LENTIL SALAD

3 cups (720 ml) water
1 cup (192 g) brown lentils, well rinsed
1 vegetable bouillon cube, crushed
Salt, to preference
¼ tsp cumin
2 sprigs green onions, sliced
1 tomato, diced
Handful of parsley, chopped
½ jalapeño, minced
4 cloves garlic, crushed
¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil
1 lemon, juiced

TILAPIA

3 tilapia fillets
Salt and pepper, to preference
2 tbsp (12 g) za'atar seasoning
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
2 tbsp (28 g) unsalted butter, melted
1 lemon, juiced
4 cloves garlic, crushed

First, preheat the oven to 400˚F (204˚C).

To a pot with 3 cups (720 ml) of water, add the lentils with the crushed bouillon cube, salt and cumin. Simmer for 20 minutes until the lentils are tender, and then drain the water.

In the meantime, pat dry the tilapia fillets and season both sides with salt and pepper. Stir together the za'atar seasoning, 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of olive oil, butter, the juice from 1 lemon and 4 crushed cloves of garlic.

Lay the tilapia fillets flat onto a nonstick baking pan, and then pour the za'atar sauce over the top evenly. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes.

The lentils should be ready at this point and slightly cooled. In a bowl, mix together the green onions, tomato, parsley, jalapeño, 4 cloves of garlic, ¼ cup (60 ml) of olive oil and the lemon juice. Add this mixture to the lentils and give it a nice stir.

Serve the mouthwatering fish on a bed of lentil salad for a complete healthy meal full of Arabic flavors.

Dawali

STUFFED GRAPE LEAVES WITH BEEF

The beloved dawali. Ask most Arabs and they will tell you that this is one of their absolute favorite meals to eat. It's just so well rounded and perfect in so many ways. I love making this dish. I absolutely enjoy the

time and preparation that goes into making dawali—from rinsing the leaves to preparing the stuffing to rolling, then stacking and cooking—all for it to be enjoyed in minutes but so worth it, every time. The grape leaves themselves are earthy and a bit sour. The stuffing, which has herbs, veggies, meat, rice and spices is just as amazing on its own. This would be known as hashweh (rice and meat stuffing). Cooking this all together for hours on the stovetop on low heat just makes for a beautiful pot of soft and tangy grape leaves that you can't help but keep going back to. I especially love grape leaves with plain yogurt on the side to dip into. Although laborious, this is a dish you will always enjoy and celebrate on the dinner table. It is almost always made on special occasions as the centerpiece and there are never any leftovers.

Makes: approximately 70 stuffed grape leaves

1 (16-oz [454-g]) jar grape leaves, preferably Al Afia brand as the stem is already trimmed

1 bunch parsley

1 large yellow onion

4 cloves garlic

1 large tomato

¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil

½ tsp salt

4 tomatoes, sliced, to line the bottom of the pot

STUFFING

1 lb (454 g) lean ground beef

1 tsp allspice

1 tsp seven spice

1 tsp salt

½ tsp pepper

2 tbsp (30 g) shatta (chili paste)

1 tbsp (16 g) tomato paste

RICE
2 cups (400 g) white short-grain rice, rinsed
1 tsp allspice
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper

BROTH
2 tbsp (32 g) tomato paste
2 vegetable bouillon cubes, crushed
½ tsp pomegranate molasses
¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil
Boiling water

FOR SERVING
Lemon wedges
Plain yogurt

First, you want to thoroughly rinse the grape leaves to get rid of any flavorings. If using fresh grape leaves, then boil them in a pot of water for 10 to 15 minutes. This will soften the leaves.

Then, we begin to work on the stuffing by combining the ground beef, 1 teaspoon each of allspice, seven spice and salt, a ½ teaspoon of pepper, the shatta and tomato paste, and thoroughly mixing everything together. Then, add the rice and another teaspoon of allspice, 1 more teaspoon of salt and another ½ teaspoon of pepper. To follow, in a food processor, pulse the parsley, onion and garlic until everything is finely chopped, and then add the large tomato and give it two more pulses.

Add this vegetable mixture to the rice and meat and stir together very well along with a ¼ cup (60 ml) of olive oil and the remaining ½ teaspoon of salt.

To stuff, flatten the grape leaf on a clean surface vein side up and smooth side down. You will be stuffing the side that is more rigid. Place 1 to 2 tablespoons (15 to 30 g) of filling going across the base of the grape leaf and spread it across in width like a thin log. The amount of filling used is dependent on the size of the grape leaf. Begin to roll from the side nearest to you tightly over the filling, and then fold the sides over and keep rolling until it resembles a mini cigar. Try to keep in mind that you don't want these too loose when rolling. Repeat until you are out of leaves or filling.

If you have leftover filling, you can cook it as you would a pot of rice and enjoy it with some plain yogurt. If you have leaves left over, then you can store them in a ziplock bag and freeze them, especially fresh ones.

Lightly oil the heavy-based pot you will be using. Keep in mind, it must fit all the grape leaves. Arrange the tomato slices to cover the entire bottom of the pot. Also, if you have any grape leaves that were torn or not used to roll, you can line the pot with them as well.

Add the stuffed grape leaves to the pot right next to each other, working from outward inward, keeping them securely in place. Keep stacking until you are out of stuffed grape leaves. Cover the leaves with a heatproof plate. This helps to keep the grape leaves in place when cooking.

To make the broth, combine 2 tablespoons (32 g) of tomato paste, bouillon cubes, the molasses and ¼ cup (60 ml) of olive oil and pour just enough boiling water to cover the grape leaves and plate by 2 inches (5 cm).

Bring this to a boil, and then simmer for 2½ hours on low to medium heat, covered. Be careful of raising the heat too high as you can scorch the bottom of the pot with the grape leaves. The tomatoes added are a barrier, but it is still something to keep in mind. Even so, I don't mind when my grape leaves at the bottom of

the pot caramelize a bit. Also, if you find that the liquid has evaporated and the grape leaves need more time, just add more of the broth or warm water, topping it off as needed.

The grape leaves are ready when they are tender and the inside is fully cooked. Carefully, flip the pot over a larger rimmed tray. Serve with wedges of lemon to squeeze on top of the dawali if you choose to and plain yogurt for dipping.

Sayadieh

CUMIN-SPICED COD WITH CARAMELIZED ONIONS & RICE

It was during my travels to Jordan and Palestine that I first enjoyed this dish. This is the meal that opened my eyes to exploring seafood more, as it is so delicious. Sayadieh is known for its cumin flavor and

mouthwatering caramelized onions. The tahini salad is a refreshing and tangy accompaniment to this dish, adding lovely acidic and creamy notes.

Servings: 4

TAHINI SALAD

½ cup (120 g) tahini paste
1 large lemon, juiced
Water, to thin out the dressing
1 clove garlic, minced
1 cup (60 g) parsley, finely chopped
½ cup (90 g) tomatoes, finely diced
Salt, to preference

CARAMELIZED ONIONS

3 tbsp (45 ml) olive oil
3 yellow onions, thinly sliced
1 tsp cumin
Salt and pepper, to preference

RICE

1½ cups (300 g) white rice, rinsed and drained
1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
1 tbsp (6 g) cumin
Pinch of turmeric
1 vegetable bouillon cube, crushed
¾ cup (158 g) cooked, caramelized onions
3 cups (720 ml) water or stock of choice

COD

1 lb (454 g) cod, cut into 4 fillets
1 tbsp (6 g) cumin

½ tbsp (3 g) smoked paprika
Salt and pepper, to preference
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil

FOR SERVING
¼ cup (27 g) toasted almonds, slivered
¼ cup (15 g) chopped parsley
Lemon wedge

First, make the salad by mixing together the tahini paste and lemon juice. It will appear paste-like at first. Then, add 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of water at a time to thin this out until it reaches a creamy consistency.

Add the minced garlic, chopped parsley and tomatoes. Season with salt and stir together. Set this aside covered in the refrigerator.

Second, prepare the onions by adding 3 tablespoons (45 ml) of olive oil to a skillet, and then the onions, 1 teaspoon of cumin and salt and pepper. Stir the onions and cook on medium heat until the onions become caramelized and slightly crisp. This can take up to 20 minutes. Three-quarters of the cooked onions will go into the rice and the rest will be used as garnish.

To prepare the rice, add the rinsed rice to a pot with 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of olive oil, 1 tablespoon (6 g) of cumin, a pinch of turmeric, a crushed bouillon cube and three-quarters of the caramelized onions, and then mix everything together. Add 3 cups (720 ml) of water to this. Bring to a boil, then a simmer and cook until the rice is fluffy and the water has evaporated.

To prepare the cod, pat it dry and then season it on both sides with 1 tablespoon (6 g) of cumin, the smoked paprika, salt and pepper. Then, add 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of olive oil to a pan. On medium-high heat, cook the fish for 4 to 5 minutes on each side. Be very gentle when flipping the fish. The fish should be seared and cooked

throughout. The cooking time will vary depending on the thickness of the fish fillet.

To assemble, add the rice to the serving dish, and then top with the remaining caramelized onions. Add the fish on top of that, and then add some toasted slivered almonds and parsley as garnish. Serve with the refreshing tahini salad and a wedge of lemon.

Sneeyet Dajaj ou Batata

ROASTED CHICKEN WITH ZA'ATAR POTATOES

This is the chicken recipe that we make alongside many of our traditional dishes. You'll find this alongside mlokheyeh (mallow stew) or served with Makloubeh bil Khodra (Vegetarian "Upside Down" Spiced

Rice Dish), among other meals. The marinade for the chicken itself just bursts with flavor. The chicken always comes out moist and delicious. I love to take a piece of pita and run it through the juices at the bottom of the pan with a piece of chicken. It's truly amazing. To top it all off, the addition of potatoes seasoned with za'atar just makes this even better, as they are crispy, yet soft and packed with robust flavor. Both complement one another so well.

Servings: 2-3

CHICKEN WITH MARINADE

1 tsp onion powder
1 tsp garlic powder
¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil
1 lemon, juiced
1 tbsp (15 g) shatta (chili sauce)
1 tbsp (16 g) tomato paste
1 tsp all-purpose poultry seasoning
1 tsp smoked paprika
1 (3-lb [1.4-kg]) chicken, cut into quarters
2 tsp (12 g) salt
1 tsp (6 g) pepper

ZA'ATAR POTATOES

2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
2 tbsp (12 g) za'atar seasoning
½ lemon, juiced
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 tsp (12 g) salt
1 tsp pepper
4 potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) cubes

FOR SERVING

Fresh pita
Vermicelli Rice

To make the marinade, stir together the onion and garlic powders, ¼ cup (60 ml) of olive oil, the juice of 1 lemon, shatta, tomato paste, poultry seasoning and smoked paprika. Pat the chicken dry with a paper towel then season on both sides generously with salt and pepper. Then, coat the chicken pieces with the marinade in a baking dish.

To make the potatoes, mix together 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of olive oil, the za'atar seasoning, the juice from half a lemon, crushed garlic, 2 teaspoons (12 g) of salt and 1 teaspoon of pepper, and then coat the potatoes well with the mixture. Add this to the pan with the marinated chicken all around the pieces.

Bake the chicken and potatoes covered with foil at 400°F (204°C) for 1½ hours. Remove the foil for the last 5 to 8 minutes to cook uncovered. Pair with some fresh bread or a side of Vermicelli Rice.

Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds

KUFTA TART WITH JERUSALEM SALAD

In our household, kufta is appreciated in all forms. Whether baked with potatoes and tahini, grilled, or sandwiched in pita. This kufta tart looks fancier but still has all those gorgeous Middle Eastern aromatic flavors.

The Jerusalem salad on top is vibrant and fresh. It cuts through the richness of the meat and makes for a perfect bite, especially with a side of rice.

Servings: 4

KUFTA TART
Handful of parsley
1 small yellow onion
4 cloves garlic
½ bell pepper, any color
1½ lb (680 g) lean ground beef
½ tbsp (3 g) allspice
½ tbsp (3 g) seven spice
Salt and pepper, to preference
1 tbsp (16 g) tomato paste
1 tbsp (15 g) shatta (chili sauce)

JERUSALEM SALAD
Handful of parsley, chopped
1 large tomato, chopped
2 Persian cucumbers, chopped
½ red onion, chopped
½ bell pepper, any color, chopped
1 tbsp (6 g) dried mint
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
1 lemon, juiced
1 tsp pomegranate molasses
1 tsp sumac
Salt, to preference

First, preheat the oven to 375˚F (191˚C) and prepare a 9-inch (23-cm) tart pan with nonstick spray.

In a food processor, pulse together a handful of parsley, yellow onion, garlic and bell pepper until fine.

Add this mixture to the beef, along with allspice, seven spice, salt, pepper, tomato paste and shatta. Mix everything together very well.

Add the beef mixture to the tart pan and spread it out to cover the base and edges of the pan.

Place the tart pan on a baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes.

In the meantime, work on the Jerusalem salad by stirring together a handful of chopped parsley, the chopped tomato, Persian cucumbers, red onion, bell pepper, dried mint, olive oil, lemon juice, pomegranate molasses, sumac and salt.

Drain the kufta of excess liquid and scrape off any fat from the meat; kufta will lose its fat while baking and therefore the edges will shrink—this is entirely normal. If you would like to brown the top, just broil it for a minute.

Top the kufta tart with the Jerusalem salad. Cut it into four large pieces and enjoy with rice (here).

Shish Barak

BEEF DUMPLINGS IN TANGY YOGURT SAUCE

It wasn't until my teenage years that I had shish barak for the first time. My paternal grandmother, who came from Palestine to visit, made it for us to enjoy since it is one of my father's favorite dishes. I swear it was

one of the best bites of food I have ever had. The minced meat dumpling is perfectly seasoned and delicate while the yogurt sauce is tangy and creamy. It is the ultimate comfort food and definitely a recipe that reminds me of my homeland because of my grandmother's teachings. This dish is well worth the time and effort to make.

Servings: 4

DOUGH

3 cups (375 g) all-purpose flour
⅓ cup (80 ml) vegetable oil
1 cup (240 ml) water
1 tbsp (18 g) salt
1 tbsp (15 g) granulated sugar
1 tbsp (8 g) dried milk powder

BEEF FILLING

1 small onion
3 cloves garlic
Handful of parsley
½ lb (226 g) ground beef
Salt and pepper, to preference
1 tbsp (6 g) allspice
½ tbsp (3 g) paprika
2–3 tbsp (16–24 g) toasted pine nuts

YOGURT SAUCE

32 oz (907 g) plain yogurt
2 tbsp (16 g) cornstarch
2 tsp (12 g) salt
2 cups (480 ml) water

FOR SERVING

1 whole head garlic, crushed
1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
2 tbsp (12 g) dried mint
Vermicelli Rice

In a stand mixer with a dough hook, combine the flour, vegetable oil, 1 cup (240 ml) of water, 1 tablespoon (18 g) of salt, sugar and dried milk powder and mix everything until it comes together, which requires 5 to 8 minutes of kneading. You can also do this by hand. The dough should be soft, smooth and not sticky. If it is sticky, add 1 tablespoon (8 g) of flour at a time to adjust. Shape this into a ball and cover it to let it rest for 30 minutes while you work on the filling.

Add the onion, three cloves of garlic and parsley to a food processor to blitz into fine pieces, then add this to the ground beef.

Add the ground beef to a nonstick pan over medium heat and start cooking it as you break it down into small bits with a wooden spoon. You need it to be small in size to fit in the dumplings. Season with salt, pepper, allspice and paprika and give it a stir. Stir in the pine nuts and then set aside the meat filling.

Place the dough onto a clean, floured surface and roll it out thinly into an even layer that isn't transparent but is also pliable. Using a 2-inch (5-cm) round cutter (or even a small teacup will do the trick), cut circles for the dumplings. Repeat until there is no more dough.

Stretch out the piece of circular dough with your hands or a rolling pin a little, but then spoon a little bit of the meat filling and fold it like a mini empanada. Then, bring both ends close together like a wonton. Repeat until you are out of meat.

Place the dumplings on a parchment-lined baking pan and bake at 400°F (204°C) for 10 minutes to toast them. Set them aside. Note

that shish barak, after it is baked and cooled, can be placed in a ziplock bag and frozen for future meals.

Make the yogurt sauce by blending together the yogurt, cornstarch, 2 teaspoons (12 g) of salt and 2 cups (480 ml) of water and adding the mixture to a pot. Stir over medium heat for 15 minutes or so until it starts to boil and slightly thicken. To thicken it more, make a cornstarch slurry to add to the sauce.

Then, add the shish barak to the sauce, once it is ready. Stir the shish barak in the sauce for 10 minutes so that everything simmers together.

Sauté the garlic with the olive oil, and then top the shish barak with that and the dried mint!

Enjoy as is or with a side of Vermicelli Rice.

Dajaj Mahshi bil Freekeh

CHICKEN STUFFED WITH FREEKEH

My Aunt Mufideh would make the best dajaj mahshi bil freekeh. I cannot make this dish without thinking of those times in Jordan at the dinner table with my aunts, uncles and cousins enjoying this meal. I

loved it from the first time I tried it. Since then, whenever I go back overseas, this dish is always a part of the dinner table welcoming us. Even before trying this dish, I have always been fond of freekeh, which is wheat that you can enjoy just like rice. I just never had them together. In the market, you can find both fine or coarse freekeh. For soups, fine freekeh is used, but coarse freekeh is used to take the place of rice, just like in this recipe. In Middle Eastern food culture, we love to stuff things, whether it's veggies or chicken. This is definitely a staple dinner piece that you can always go back to. Enjoy it with some salad and yogurt and you have yourself a wholesome meal.

Servings: 4-6

CHICKEN

2 (2.5-lb [1.1-kg]) whole chickens

1 tsp salt

1 lemon, juiced

1 tbsp (15 ml) vinegar

MARINADE

1 lemon, juiced

2 tbsp (32 g) tomato paste

1 tbsp (6 g) paprika

1 tbsp (6 g) seven spice

1 tbsp (8 g) garlic powder

Salt and pepper, to preference

STUFFING

2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil

1 yellow onion, finely diced

Salt and pepper, to preference

2 cups (380 g) coarse freekeh, thoroughly rinsed, soaked and drained

¼ tsp cinnamon

½ tsp cumin
½ tsp seven spice
2½ cups (600 ml) vegetable or chicken stock
1 bouillon cube, crushed

FOR SERVING
Jerusalem Salad
Plain yogurt

Start by cleaning your chicken thoroughly. I do so by rubbing it with a teaspoon of salt, lemon juice and vinegar, and then rinsing the chicken and patting it dry.

To make the marinade, mix together the juice of 1 lemon, tomato paste, paprika, 1 tablespoon (6 g) of seven spice, garlic powder, salt and pepper until the mixture is paste-like.

Make some room underneath the skin of the chicken and rub in some of the marinade. Then, rub the marinade all over both chickens.

To make the stuffing, add 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of olive oil to a pot. Add the onion and sauté until it is caramelized, which will take 5 to 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, stirring every few minutes.

Add the freekeh to the onion and give it a nice stir for 2 to 4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper along with the cinnamon, cumin and ½ teaspoon of seven spice. Add the stock and crushed bouillon cube and bring the freekeh to a boil, and then to a simmer until the liquid has cooked off.

Once the freekeh is cooked, it is time to stuff the chicken. With a spoon, add the freekeh into the cavity of the chicken. Then, close the cavity by using a skewer or toothpick to seal the end. You will have extra freekeh, but this is typical, as the freekeh used to stuff

the chicken won't be enough to feed many. So, serve the extra freekeh with the meal!

Preheat the oven to 400˚F (204˚C). Bake the chicken for 1 hour covered, and then uncovered for another 30 minutes. Chicken is safe to eat and perfectly tender when its internal temperature reaches 165˚F (74˚C) in the thickest part. If needed, allow the chicken to cook longer for 5- to 10-minute intervals until the internal temperature reaches 165˚F (74˚C). Keep in mind that different size chickens will require different cooking times; that is why a meat thermometer is a great tool to have.

Allow the chicken to rest for 5 to 10 minutes before cutting into it. Enjoy with Jerusalem Salad and/or some plain yogurt.

Bamya

OKRA STEW WITH LAMB & VERMICELLI RICE

Bamya is a very popular dish in the Middle East. There are several variations of okra in our cuisine, as it is very nutritious. I am sharing with you the most traditional one where baby okra is cooked in a

delicious tomato broth with chunks of tender lamb served with rice. Okra, although mild itself, takes other flavors very well, making it perfect for stews. Many associate okra with a slimy texture and shy away from this wonderful vegetable, but you will not taste that consistency in this dish. This recipe comes together easily and is so comforting.

Servings: 2-3

3 tbsp (45 ml) olive oil, divided
1 onion, finely diced
1 lb (454 g) boneless lamb chunks
½ tsp pepper
2 tsp (12 g) salt, divided
1 tsp seven spice
1 tsp allspice
3 tbsp (48 g) tomato paste
4 ripe tomatoes, puréed
14 oz (396 g) frozen okra
9 cups (2.2 L) water
5 cloves garlic, minced

VERMICELLI RICE
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
⅓ cup (33 g) vermicelli noodles
2 cups (400 g) white rice, rinsed and drained
4 cups (960 ml) boiling water
1 tsp salt

To a large pot, add the 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of olive oil and the onion and sauté until translucent, which will take 5 to 8 minutes

To this, add the lamb pieces and season with the pepper and 1 teaspoon each of salt, seven spice and allspice. Mix everything together and sear the lamb on both sides for a few minutes.

Add the tomato paste and give it a stir before adding the tomato purée, okra and water. Season with the remaining teaspoon of salt.

Let this boil uncovered for 1 hour. Then cover the pot and simmer for another 10 minutes.

In the meantime, add 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of oil to a pot along with the vermicelli noodles to toast over low heat for 2 to 4 minutes, until they start to brown. To this, add the rice and boiling water, along with a teaspoon of salt. Stir this together and let it simmer on low to medium heat for 20 minutes until the rice is fully cooked. Fluff the rice with a fork and keep it covered to stay warm to accompany the bamya.

At this point, the lamb pieces should be tender. If they are not, cook them longer and add more water if necessary. Sauté the garlic with a tablespoon of olive oil until it is browned and fragrant. Top the okra stew with it and serve with rice for a complete meal!

Jumbari bil Sumac ma' Batata Harra

SUMAC-SPICED SHRIMP WITH SPICY POTATOES

Palestinian cuisine emanates simplicity. A couple of vibrant, high-quality ingredients come together to make this wonderful dish. Growing up, we often enjoyed batata harra (spiced potatoes) as a side to brunch. The

potato bits are crisp, tender and have a subtle spiciness that pairs really well with the tangy sumac shrimp.

Servings: 3

1 lb (454 g) large raw shrimp, deveined with no tail

Salt and pepper, to preference

1 tbsp (6 g) sumac

2 potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) cubes

¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil

2 tsp (10 g) shatta or harissa paste

4 cloves garlic, crushed

¼ cup (15 g) chopped parsley

¼ cup (4 g) chopped cilantro

½ lemon, juiced

Season the shrimp with salt, pepper and sumac, and then set this aside.

In a bowl, combine the potatoes with the olive oil and shatta. Season the potatoes with salt and pepper to preference as well.

Add the potatoes to a skillet and cook uncovered on medium heat for 10 minutes before covering them with a lid and cooking for another 10 to 15 minutes, until the potato pieces are tender inside and crisp on the outside. In the last few minutes of cooking, add in the garlic to sauté with the potatoes. Once they are cooked, set aside the potatoes together with the excess oil in a bowl.

To the same pan, add the shrimp and sear for 2 minutes on each side until they are opaque pink. Let the shrimp cool for a few minutes. Then, add the shrimp to the same bowl as the potatoes along with the parsley, cilantro and lemon juice. Give this a quick stir and enjoy it warm or at room temperature.

Kousa Mahshi

STUFFED ZUCCHINI IN TOMATO SAUCE

Kousa mahshi is such an integral part of Palestinian cuisine. You can find stuffed zucchini alongside stuffed grape leaves or kousa bil laban (yogurt) or this version, kousa mahshi bil bandura. In this variation, the

zucchini in tomato sauce is served with plain yogurt, which is how this dish is often eaten in parts of Palestine such as Khalil. It offers a creamy and tangy coolness to the dish that pairs beautifully.

Servings: 4

16 zucchini (Arabic or Mexican squash is best)
1 lb (454 g) lean ground beef
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tsp (12 g) salt
1 tsp pepper
½ tbsp (3 g) allspice
2 tbsp (30 g) shatta (chili paste)
2 tbsp (32 g) tomato paste
1 cup (200 g) white short-grain rice, rinsed

TOMATO SAUCE
6 tbsp (96 g) tomato paste
1 vegetable bouillon cube, crushed
6 ripe tomatoes, puréed
12 cups (2.9 L) vegetable stock
1 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper
6 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil

TOPPING
1 cup (240 ml) yogurt

The first step is to core the zucchini to make room for the stuffing. Use an apple corer to scrape out the insides of the zucchini but be

careful not to pierce through the skin or make the walls too thin. Take the corer and insert it 90 percent down into the center of the zucchini and pull out the flesh. Repeat this until there is enough room for at least 2 tablespoons (30 g) of stuffing. Reserve the insides of the zucchini for other dishes like Muthawamet Kousa.

To make the stuffing, add the ground beef, 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of olive oil, onion, 4 cloves of minced garlic, 2 teaspoons (12 g) of salt, 1 teaspoon of pepper and the allspice to a pan on medium-high heat. Cook everything together while breaking down the meat until it is browned and cooked through, which should take roughly 6 to 8 minutes.

Add the shatta and 2 tablespoons (32 g) of tomato paste and cook for another 1 to 2 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary. Set the meat aside and add the rinsed rice to the mixture. Stir the rice and meat together very well.

Stuff the cored zucchini with the meat mixture three-quarters of the way, as the rice will expand when it is cooked. If you have extra filling, feel free to cook it just like rice.

To make the tomato sauce, combine 6 tablespoons (96 g) of tomato paste, the bouillon cube, tomatoes, vegetable stock and 1 teaspoon each of salt and pepper and stir very well together in a large pot. Let this simmer for 5 minutes before adding the stuffed zucchini to the pot. Bring everything to a boil and then simmer for 1 hour to 1½ hours, uncovered, until the zucchini are tender and the rice is cooked. Pan-fry the garlic in 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of olive oil until crisp and fragrant and add it to the tomato sauce.

Serve with dollops of yogurt on top of the zucchini and tomato sauce to add a creamy coolness to the dish.

Sneeyet Lahmeh ou Khodra

OVEN-BAKED BEEF & VEGGIES

My maternal grandmother, Teta Fathiya, is known for this dish. Every time we would visit her overseas, this was the dish she made to welcome us. In Arabic, we would refer to the meat of this recipe as “ras asfoor,”

which actually translates to “bird's head,” referring to the small size of the meat in this meal. The meat is baked for more than an hour to perfection along with vegetables, which will tenderize and caramelize as well. In my family, we warm up pita bread and dig in straight from the baking pan, making sure to get a little bit of everything in each bite.

Servings: 4

1½ lb (680 g) beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) cubes
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 colored bell pepper, finely chopped
5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 zucchini, chopped, optional
½ cup (64 g) chopped carrots, optional
2 tsp (12 g) salt
1 tsp pepper
½ tbsp (3 g) allspice
1 large potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) cubes
1 pint (298 g) cherry tomatoes, halved or 2 large tomatoes, chopped
1 cup (240 ml) water

Fresh pita, for serving

First, preheat the oven to 400˚F (204˚C) before getting started on the dish.

To a pot, add the cubed meat and sauté for 5 to 10 minutes until the meat releases its own juice. Once that happens, get rid of the liquid residue.

Add the olive oil to the meat and sauté on medium-high heat for 5 minutes before adding the onion, bell pepper and garlic. If desired, diced zucchini and carrots would be a great addition. Season with

salt, pepper and the allspice, and then mix and cook everything together for 5 to 10 minutes.

To a 9 × 13—inch (23 × 33—cm) baking pan, add all the contents of the pot along with the potatoes and tomatoes. Pour in the water and cover the pan with aluminum foil.

Bake for 1½ hours but uncover the foil for the last 15 minutes. Before enjoying, gently stir the meat and vegetables in the oils from the pan so they are extra juicy and flavorful. The meat and vegetables should be tender. This dish is best enjoyed with fresh pita bread to scoop up all the delicious flavors.

Shawarmat Dajaj

CHICKEN SHAWARMA

Chicken shawarma is one of the most popular Middle Eastern street foods. It has so many beautiful, warm flavors like cinnamon, cumin and allspice that set it apart from any other chicken you may have tried.

Traditionally, it is cooked on a rotating spit, which allows for a wonderful, crisp exterior to the chicken while remaining moist when slicing it. To make it more attainable to make at home, my recipe simplifies this but does not compromise on flavor. Shawarma is often served in sandwiches overseas, making it common to be eaten on the go or for a quick bite. You can even make shawarma bowls with your favorite Mediterranean toppings and rice for a complete meal, too. This is a recipe I have made through the years and thoroughly enjoy, as it brings back memories of my trips to Jordan and Palestine where I enjoyed endless shawarma.

Servings: 6

3 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into strips or cubes
3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into cubes
¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil, divided
1 lemon, juiced
2 tsp (4 g) cumin
1 tbsp (6 g) allspice
1 tbsp (6 g) smoked paprika
1 tsp turmeric
½ tbsp (4 g) chili powder
1 tsp cinnamon
2 tbsp (16 g) garlic powder
1 tbsp (5 g) dried oregano
Salt and pepper, to preference

Marinate the chicken with 3 tablespoons (45 ml) of olive oil, fresh lemon juice, cumin, allspice, smoked paprika, turmeric, chili powder, cinnamon, garlic powder, dried oregano, salt and pepper. Mix everything very well so that the chicken is evenly coated with the marinade. You can either do this in a bowl or a ziplock bag.

Let this marinate for at least 2 hours or at most, overnight in the refrigerator.

Add ½ tablespoon (8 ml) of olive oil to a pan and sauté half of the chicken so as to not overcrowd the pan. You want the chicken to get a nice sear and cook through. This will take about 8 minutes on medium-high heat.

Repeat with the remaining chicken. Once all the chicken is cooked, place it on a cutting board and roughly chop the chicken. I love to use this chicken shawarma in two ways—in a sandwich or in a bowl.

For a chicken shawarma sandwich, use a wrap-style bread, and then smear it with garlic spread and top with chicken shawarma, sliced Arabic pickles and even a few fries in the sandwich. For a bowl, serve the chicken shawarma with rice, salad and a garlic or tahini sauce topping.

Macarona bi' Lahmeh

PASTA WITH YOGURT & MINCED MEAT

Servings: 4

1 lb (454 g) spaghetti

3 cups (720 ml) plain yogurt
7 cloves garlic, minced
½ large lemon, juiced
3 tbsp (18 g) dried mint
Salt and pepper, to preference
3 tbsp (24 g) pine nuts
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil, divided
½ lb (226 g) ground beef
½ tbsp (3 g) allspice

Pasta isn't big in Middle Eastern cuisine, but yogurt surely is. This spaghetti with a garlic-forward yogurt sauce is how I grew up enjoying pasta. It's one of my favorites to this day, as it is effortless and delicious. What is even better is the seasoned beef bits on top, which are absolutely delicious.

Boil the pasta in salted water until it is al dente. In the meantime, prepare the sauce by stirring together the yogurt, garlic, lemon juice and dried mint until it has a creamy consistency. Season with salt and pepper to preference.

Sauté the pine nuts in 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of olive oil until they are toasted nicely and then set them aside.

In the same pan, sauté the ground beef with 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of olive oil. Season with salt, pepper and allspice. Break the meat into bits with a wooden spoon and cook until the meat is browned, which shouldn't take more than 5 to 8 minutes.

Once the pasta is cooked and drained, toss it in the creamy yogurt sauce. Top it off with the meat and pine nuts for a well-rounded meal. Serve right away to enjoy.

Pomegranate Molasses & Harissa Salmon with Arugula Salad

The first time I ever had salmon was in Yafa, Palestine. It's a beautiful area along the water where you can enjoy some of the freshest seafood.

This recipe is inspired by my time there. The pomegranate molasses, olive oil and harissa are all delicious Middle Eastern flavors that complement the fish nicely. You will taste a slight sweetness and heat with the salmon and lots of tang with the salad. It all comes together nicely.

Servings: 4

2 lb (908 g) fresh salmon, cut into 4–6 fillets
Salt and pepper, to preference
1½ tbsp (27 g) pomegranate molasses
1½ tbsp (22 ml) olive oil
3 tbsp (45 g) harissa

ARUGULA SALAD
1 lb (454 g) baby arugula
⅓ cup (39 g) chopped walnuts
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
½ tbsp (9 g) pomegranate molasses
½ lemon, juiced
½ tbsp (3 g) sumac
½ tbsp (3 g) dried mint
Salt and pepper, to preference
⅓ cup (47 g) pomegranate arils, for garnish

Pat the salmon fillets dry with a paper towel, and then season with salt and pepper.

In a small bowl, stir together 1½ tablespoons (27 g) of the pomegranate molasses, 1½ tablespoons (22 ml) of olive oil and the harissa.

Spread the sauce evenly among the fillets.

Place in a nonstick or greased baking pan and bake at 400°F (204°C) for 15 minutes covered, and then 5 minutes uncovered until the salmon is cooked throughout.

In the meantime, mix together the arugula with the nuts and onion. Make the dressing by combining a tablespoon (15 ml) of olive oil, ½ tablespoon (9 g) of pomegranate molasses, lemon juice, sumac and dried mint.

Toss the dressing into the salad before serving. Sprinkle some salt and pepper, and then garnish with the pomegranate arils and enjoy alongside the salmon.

Sweet Treats

When visiting a Palestinian household, a meal is never complete until you have had a dessert or two. Even if you were to make a quick visit on short notice, it is almost guaranteed

you will be greeted with a sweet treat. Palestinians are very generous people who show their love in many ways, but especially through food. My mother would always have a spectacular assortment of desserts on the table when we had guests over. Anything from baklawa, which is crispy phyllo layered with nuts and sweetened with syrup, to Ka'ek Yansoon ma' Simsim, which are the perfect anise-flavored biscuits. I also need to mention the very popular semolina cake, Hareesa, and the famous Palestinian cheese pastry known as Knafeh. My mom personally loved it. In fact, she would light up when she was making sweets for friends and family. Coincidentally, I am the same way.

I'll find myself in the kitchen baking away to share with friends, family and neighbors. It brings true joy to my heart—a form of therapy in many ways. While many of my recipes are traditional Arabic desserts taught to me by my mother, I have also created ones with twists of my own, as you will see with the chocolatey baklawa filling and the Ashta Fruit Tarts (Phyllo Tarts Topped with Cream, Nuts, Berries & Honey). These recipes celebrate widely loved Palestinian flavors and treats, but with a more modern approach that will surely satisfy your sweet tooth.

Knafeh

SWEET CHEESE PASTRY

Knafeh is one of—if not the—most popular Palestinian dessert. Nablus, Falasteen is known worldwide for its spectacular knafeh, which is a sweet cheese pastry that has dimensions of flavors. There are also so

many variations to this beloved dessert. In this recipe, I use a common cheese in Middle Eastern desserts known as Arabic sweet cheese and fresh mozzarella to get that gooey cheese pull factor. Kataifi*, also known as shredded phyllo dough, which is typically used in knafeh khishneh (knafeh with a crunchy top as opposed to soft), is used here for that crisp exterior that protects the cheese filling. Then, this dessert is topped with simple syrup for sweetness and crushed pistachios for color and flavor.*

Servings: about 16

SWEET CHEESE PASTRY

1 (16-oz[454-g]) package of kataifi dough, thawed to room temperature

12 oz (340 g) Arabic sweet cheese

8 oz (226 g) fresh mozzarella

⅓ cup (75 g) ghee, softened

¼ tsp knafeh dye, optional

Pistachios, crushed for garnish

SYRUP

2 cups (400 g) granulated sugar

1 cup (240 ml) water

1 tsp lemon juice

First, preheat the oven to 450˚F (232˚C).

In the food processor, in intervals, pulse the kataifi dough into finer shreds. Set it to the side.

Remove any excess moisture from the cheeses by either patting them dry or using a cheesecloth to squeeze any excess liquid. Then, in the same food processor, crumble the cheeses until they resemble small chunks.

Now, mix the ghee and knafeh dye, if using, and using your hands or a pastry brush, spread the mixture across a 14-inch (35-cm) round baking pan and its edges. Knafeh dye gives this dish its signature bright orange color.

To the pan, add 2 handfuls of the dough at a time and spread it out using the back of a cup or plate to firmly press the dough down into the pan. Keep repeating this until three-quarters of the shredded kataifi is used. The remaining kataifi will be used later.

Top the dough with the cheeses, leaving ½ inch (1.3 cm) of space around the edges. Press the cheese gently into the dough. Then, scatter the rest of the reserved dough on top of the cheese, lightly covering it.

Bake this for 12 to 15 minutes covered in foil, and then 5 minutes uncovered. Wiggle the baking pan to see if the edges loosen from the pan and to see if it is crisp. These are both indications that the knafeh is ready and the cheese is melted.

While the knafeh is baking, make the simple syrup. Prepare the syrup by combining the sugar and water in a saucepan on medium to high heat, stirring continuously until it reaches a boil. Then, stop stirring and let it simmer for about 10 minutes until it thickens. Once you have a consistency similar to corn syrup, add the lemon juice and stir. Set the syrup to the side. Any extra syrup can be stored for up to 2 months in a container in the refrigerator.

When the knafeh is finished baking, flip it over into a slightly larger rimmed platter, drizzle a majority of the syrup on top and sprinkle the crushed pistachios, and then cut and serve immediately. Knafeh is best served fresh. Serve extra syrup on the side for those who prefer a sweeter knafeh.

Alternatively, if you are uncomfortable flipping the knafeh, use the following instructions for easier assembly.

Preheat the oven to 450˚F (232˚C).

In the food processor, in intervals, pulse the kataifi dough into finer shreds. Set aside.

Remove any excess moisture from the cheeses by either patting them dry or using a cheesecloth to squeeze any excess liquid. Then, in the same food processor, crumble the cheeses until they resemble small chunks.

To prepare the dough add ½ cup (120 ml) of melted ghee or unsalted butter to the shredded kataifi dough along with dye, if using. Stir and set aside.

Add half of your prepared dough to the bottom of a greased pan and press it down gently. Then add all the cheese and top it with the remaining half of the dough. Gently pat down the dough.

Bake this for 12 to 15 minutes covered in foil, and then for 5 minutes uncovered. When the knafeh is finished baking, pour the warm syrup on top and garnish with pistachios. Serve fresh.

Chocolate Almond Baklawa

This is such a well-known dessert that is seen across the Mediterranean in many forms. Baklawa is what we call baklava in the Arabic language. The most traditional in our region is baklawa with walnuts and a simple syrup, but baklawa is so versatile and is great to get creative with. So, for

you, I have this Chocolate Almond Baklawa. The first time I had chocolate with phyllo, I was won over. I still think about it to this day. The buttery, crispy phyllo and the subtle, yet prominent chocolate just worked. That moment inspired this recipe. I truly don't believe it is baklawa if there aren't nuts, and my go-to combination is almost always chocolate and almonds, so here they are, creating magic for the taste buds. The simple syrup also has a hint of coffee to accentuate the flavor of the chocolate in the baklawa. If you didn't know, baklawa is even better the second day, as the flavors will have had time to really develop and meld together. The same goes for this wonderful recipe.

Makes:

2-3 dozen pieces

6 oz (175 g) 70% dark chocolate, finely chopped

14 oz (397 g) unsalted whole almonds, finely chopped

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 (16-oz [454-g]) package phyllo dough, thawed

2 sticks (226 g) unsalted butter, melted

SYRUP

1 ¼ cups (250 g) granulated sugar

1 cup (240 ml) water

1½ tsp (2 g) instant coffee

Preheat the oven to 350˚F (177˚C).

Mix together the chopped chocolate, almonds and cinnamon. You can either chop each ingredient by hand or with a food processor one at a time and then combine everything.

In a 9 × 13—inch (23 × 33—cm) baking pan, lay half of the phyllo sheets flat and evenly in the pan. Trim the edges if it does not fit exactly.

Add the chocolate-almond mixture on top of the phyllo, spreading it out evenly.

Place the rest of the phyllo sheets on top of the filling, and then with a sharp knife, slice across the shorter side and then slice diagonally to create diamond-looking pieces. You can also easily make square pieces. Either will be great!

Pour the melted butter all over the top evenly.

Bake for 35 minutes, until the baklawa is lightly browned on top.

While the baklawa is baking, make the syrup by combining the ingredients in a small pot. Stir together on medium-high heat until it starts to boil, and then let it simmer for 10 to 15 minutes until it thickens slightly. Set this aside. You should taste some coffee flavor in the syrup. If you like it more pronounced, feel free to add more instant coffee and stir.

After baking, pour the warm syrup immediately all over the top of the baklawa. Let the baklawa cool completely to room temperature to absorb the syrup. Baklawa is best the next day!

Fig & Honey Pistachio Cake

I remember early summer mornings sitting on the baranda at my grandparents' home in Palestine enjoying figs from their fig tree. I'd never had afresh fig until then and it was life changing. Not only are they beautiful fruits, but they are also naturally sweet and delicious. My

father could eat figs by the dozen. I wish I was joking! This fig cake is inspired by those memories. It's sweetened with honey and moistened with olive oil. You will see specks of pistachio throughout and taste a hint of cardamom when enjoying this delicious fig cake that pairs perfectly with a cup of coffee.

Makes: 12 slices

¾ cup (180 ml) honey
½ cup (120 ml) olive oil
2 eggs
1 tbsp (15 ml) vanilla extract
½ cup (120 ml) sour cream
1 tsp ground cardamom
1½ tsp (7 g) baking powder
1⅓ cup (166 g) all-purpose flour
½ cup (50 g) pistachios, chopped
8 fresh figs, ripe and halved
⅓ cup (80 g) fig jam

Preheat the oven to 350˚F (177˚C).

In a bowl, mix together the honey, olive oil, eggs and vanilla really well. If using a stand mixer, do this with the paddle attachment. Add the sour cream to this and give it a few stirs.

Then, add the cardamom, baking powder and flour to the wet ingredients and stir everything together until you have a smooth and creamy batter.

Fold in the pistachios. Pour the batter into a 9-inch (23-cm) baking pan that has been sprayed with nonstick spray.

Next, add the fig halves to the top of the cake batter, lining them next to one another until you have a spiral of figs.

Bake the cake on the bottom rack for 50 minutes then move to the top rack for 5 to 10 minutes. Check on the cake and leave in longer if needed. Once baked through, glaze the top of the cake with jam. The figs will be juicy and caramelized, while the inside will be moist and the edges crisp and coffee cake—like.

Warbat

CREAM-STUFFED PHYLLO TRIANGLES

On special occasions, we would always have trays of fresh warbat from our local Arab bakery to pass out to family and friends. The fact that they are eaten without any cutlery makes them even more popular as you

can just enjoy this handheld dessert at any time with a napkin in hand. Whether it is Eid, Ramadan or an engagement party, these were a dessert that always made the table. The irresistible, crisp exterior with the creamy ashta filling and simple syrup on top just makes it heavenly. It is no wonder that these are a favorite amongst many.

Servings: 12

ASHTA FILLING

1 cup (240 ml) whole milk

1 cup (240 ml) heavy cream

1 tbsp (8 g) all-purpose flour

1 tbsp (8 g) cornstarch

1½ tbsp (22 g) granulated sugar

½ tsp orange blossom water

PHYLLO

10 sheets of phyllo dough (#4), defrosted

6 tbsp (84 g) unsalted butter, melted

SYRUP

1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar

1 cup (240 ml) water

1 tbsp (15 ml) fresh lemon juice

GARNISH

¼ cup (25 g) pistachios, crushed

First, the ashta must be prepared. This is the cream filling that will stuff the phyllo triangles. To do so, combine the milk, cream, flour, cornstarch and sugar in a small pot. Stir everything together very well until there are no lumps.

Once that is achieved, go ahead and place the pot on the stovetop on medium-high heat. To avoid scorching the mixture, constantly

stir the ashta for 15 minutes or so until it begins to bubble and thicken to a creamy texture. Add the orange blossom water and give it a stir.

At this point, place the cream in a shallow dish or pan to cool. Cover the top with plastic wrap to avoid a skin forming as it cools. Allow it to cool at room temperature for 15 minutes, and then place it in the refrigerator to continue cooling for 45 minutes or so.

Meanwhile, take out the phyllo sheets and cover them with a damp towel as you work so they do not dry out.

On a large, clean surface, place one phyllo sheet and gently spread some melted butter onto it, either with a pastry brush or your hands, being sure not to rip the phyllo sheets. They are delicate and this step requires a little bit of patience and a light hand. The idea is to have the sheets lightly glisten with butter but to not be drenched.

Top the phyllo sheet with another phyllo sheet and keep repeating these steps until you reach the last sheet. This last one will not be topped with butter, as the filling will be placed on the top sheet. Trim the stacked sheets on all edges with a pizza cutter or knife so that they are all equal.

To achieve the triangle shape that warbat is known for, you will need a sharp knife and a ruler. Using a ruler and knife, create 12 even squares about 4 × 4 inches (10 × 10 cm) in size.

Preheat the oven to 350˚F (177˚C). At this point, the filling should have thickened a bit and be cool enough to scoop. Place one large spoonful (about 2 tablespoons [30 g]) of filling in each square, and then fold over the pastry to create the triangle effect. Don't press down too much; rather, just gently fold it over and give it a little pat. Repeat with the remaining square sheets.

Place them in a baking dish where each of the four triangles meet to create a square, and then brush the tops with butter.

Bake for 30 minutes, and then broil them for a minute to achieve a nice golden color on top.

Meanwhile, make the syrup so it is hot and ready by the time the warbat is out of the oven. Combine the sugar and water in a small pot and let this come to a boil. Then, turn down the heat to a simmer for 10 minutes until it thickens slightly and then stir in the lemon juice.

Once the warbat are done baking, spoon over most of the syrup on top of the cream-stuffed pastries. The amount you add is completely up to you, as it is a preference to how sweet you would like your pastry. Typically, I use three-quarters of the syrup on all 12 warbat and then save the remainder in a small container in the refrigerator to use in the future, as it keeps well.

Sprinkle them with crushed pistachios on top and allow them to cool for an hour before enjoying!

Booza Arabiya

ARABIC ICE CREAM PINWHEELS

I have very distinct memories of enjoying booza arabiya in the neighborhood ice cream shops in Jordan and Palestine, which are neighboring countries. I spent many of my summers there with extended

family, and on those summer nights, you would find me downtown requesting this ice cream. Arabic ice cream is known for its slight mastic flavor—lots of pistachios and elasticity, which comes from the sahlep. I am telling you I've seen this ice cream stretch a foot, which just makes it even more special. It is hard to find in the States, so I enjoy it overseas any chance I have. Here, I have created that nostalgic dessert, but without the need for an ice cream maker and in pinwheel form to see the beautiful swirl of pistachios.

Makes: a dozen slices

2 cups (480 ml) whole milk

2 cups (480 ml) heavy cream

1 (14-oz [414-ml]) can sweetened condensed milk

¾ tsp ground mastic

1½ tbsp (15 g) sahlep powder (see Tip)

¼ tsp rose water

1½ cups (150 g) crushed pistachios

In a pot, combine the milk, cream, condensed milk, mastic and sahlep powder. Stir everything together very well until there are no lumps before placing the pot on the stovetop.

Stir this mixture over medium heat for 20 minutes until it starts to bubble and thicken. Add in the rose water at this point. The sahlep should offer a stretchy consistency that will become more noticeable after it chills, as the mixture will have elasticity to it.

Once the mixture seems like a thick pudding, place it in a loaf pan and let it cool to room temperature before covering it and placing it in the freezer for approximately 5 hours.

At this point, the consistency should be creamy and thick enough for you to spread the ice cream.

In a 9 × 13—inch (23 × 33—cm) pan, lay down some parchment paper, and then put the crushed pistachios all over the parchment paper. Top this with the ice cream and spread it out gently to cover the pan, leaving an inch (2.5 cm) around the edges.

Place the ice cream back in the freezer for 2 hours. Take it out and, using one of the parchment ends on the smaller side, start to roll the ice cream into a pinwheel, using the parchment to help.

Once it is rolled, slice the booza arabiya and serve. To store, wrap it in the parchment and then aluminum foil as well, just like a salami or log. Keep it in the freezer and enjoy a slice or two whenever you desire. Slice and allow it to defrost for 15 minutes so it is not so icy, but more so creamy when you serve it.

Tip: *Sahlep powder is not to be confused with sahlab the milk beverage. There are powder mixes for this Arab drink, but that powder will not work in this recipe. You will need sahlep powder distinctly used for making Arabic ice cream.*

Awameh

SWEET DUMPLINGS

The first time I ever had awameh was at my Aunt Hala's house in Jordan, who inspired this recipe. How can I forget those crunchy, yet soft and airy sweet dumplings that literally just melt in your mouth, bursting

with flavor? You can't help but to go back and have a second, third and fourth. These are dangerously addictive. You taste the yeast subtly in this fried dough and while the outside is crisp and golden, the inside is light and fluffy. It is coated in simple syrup that has a hint of orange blossom for literally the perfect bite.

Makes: about 2 dozen

1 cup (125 g) all-purpose flour
1 tbsp (15 g) granulated sugar
1 tbsp (8 g) cornstarch
1 tsp active dry yeast
1 cup (240 ml) warm water
Vegetable oil, for frying

SYRUP
1 cup (120 g) granulated sugar
1 cup (240 ml) water
½ tsp orange blossom water

To make the dumplings, combine the flour, sugar, cornstarch, yeast and warm water in a bowl. Gently mix everything together, and then cover and set the dough aside in a warm spot for 1 hour.

While waiting, make the syrup by combining the sugar and water. Stir them together and let this boil for 5 to 10 minutes until it thickens slightly. Then add the orange blossom water and stir, and then set this aside.

To a shallow pan, add oil to fill about half the pan. Let this warm up.

To create the balls, use two teaspoons—one to scoop the dough and the other to push the dough ball downward into the oil. Don't worry

if they are not perfectly round, as they will still be perfectly delicious!

If the dough balls rise straight to the top, then the oil is too hot, so trouble-shoot with one or two until you reach the right consistency. If the oil is too hot, then the insides of the awameh won't be cooked but the outside will be browned. The dough balls should not float up right away, but should take about 5 minutes to fry until they are golden brown all around and float to the top.

Remove the fried balls and place them in a colander to allow any excess oil to drip off.

Then, place them in the cooled syrup and toss. Enjoy them right away while they are warm and crunchy.

Ghraybeh

PISTACHIO & CARDAMOM SHORTBREAD COOKIES

The pistachio and cardamom in these melt-in-your-mouth butter cookies are just divine. The aroma when baking these will make your house smell just like the holidays. The specks of green from the pistachios also look

so beautiful. Don't be fooled by the simplicity of this cookie; it has dimensions of flavor.

Makes:
approximately 2 dozen

2 sticks (226 g) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup (120 g) powdered sugar
1 tsp ground cardamom
½ tsp orange blossom water
2 cups (250 g) all-purpose flour
½ cup (50 g) crushed pistachios

In a bowl, combine the butter and powdered sugar with a rubber spatula until it becomes one creamy mixture.

Add in the cardamom and orange blossom water.

Then, add 1 cup (125 g) of flour to start, using the rubber spatula to mix it with the batter. Add the rest of the flour along with the pistachios and mix everything together with your hands for a few minutes until the entire cookie dough comes together.

Don't be alarmed if the cookie dough doesn't look like it's coming together. Just keep working it until it's one cohesive dough.

Shape the cookie dough into a log and wrap it in plastic wrap. It may help to shape the cookie dough in the plastic wrap, using that to help. Place in the freezer for 1 hour to chill.

Preheat the oven to 350˚F (177˚C).

Once chilled, slice ¼- to ½-inch (6-mm to 1.3-cm)-thick slices of the log, just like a salami! Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and place the cookies 2 inches (5 cm) apart, as these cookies will spread a bit while baking.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes until the bottoms of the cookies are lightly browned.

Allow the cookies to cool completely to avoid the risk of breaking, as these are delicate butter cookies. Enjoy!

Fudgy Pomegranate Brownies with Tahini Swirl

An American classic with Palestinian flare. Pomegranate molasses is a pantry staple in our cuisine. While rarely used in desserts, it offers a

fruity and acidic flavor profile that complements the rich chocolate beautifully in this brownie. The tahini swirls add a mesmerizing appeal and a subtle nuttiness to the top of the brownie. I must warn you though, you may want to make two batches of these because they are addictive!

Makes: 9 pieces

BROWNIE BATTER

1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar

6 tbsp (84 g) unsalted butter, melted

2 tbsp (36 g) pomegranate molasses

2 tbsp (30 g) tahini paste

2 eggs, beaten

1 tsp vanilla extract

¾ cup (94 g) all-purpose flour

¾ cup (75 g) unsweetened cocoa powder

Pinch of salt

1 tsp espresso powder

⅓ cup (55 g) semisweet or dark chocolate chips

TOPPING

⅓ cup (80 g) tahini paste

Preheat the oven to 350˚F (177˚C) and prepare an 8 × 8—inch (20 × 20—cm) baking pan with parchment paper.

Cream together the sugar, butter, pomegranate molasses and 2 tablespoons (30 g) of tahini. Add the beaten eggs and vanilla to the mixture and stir everything together well. Fold in the flour, cocoa powder, salt and espresso powder until all the ingredients are mixed together nicely. Last, fold in the chocolate chips.

Pour the batter evenly onto the lined baking dish and spread it out using a rubber spatula. The batter will be thick and sticky.

Add the tahini topping in dollops to the surface of the brownie batter. Using a toothpick/skewer or butter knife, create swirls in the batter with the tahini.

Bake for 25 minutes on the top rack of the oven to keep the brownies from drying out.

Once baked, allow them to cool for 10 minutes at room temperature before slicing them into nine equal pieces. The brownies should be decadent and fudgy but bursting with bright pomegranate flavor.

Hareesa

SEMOLINA ORANGE BLOSSOM COCONUT CAKE

Hareesa is a very well-known Middle Eastern semolina cake that is super moist, sweet and flavored with coconut and nuts. I have taken this beloved dessert and added orange as a flavor profile, along with making

it loaf-style. Hareesa was always my mother's go-to dessert when we would have guests coming over. Unlike a traditional semolina cake, this version does not have nuts on top, but rather more coconut.

Servings: 10 slices

1 cup (240 ml) plain yogurt

1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar

1½ tsp (7 g) baking powder

¼ tsp baking soda

3 cups (500 g) coarse semolina

1 stick (113 g) unsalted butter, melted

1 cup (93 g) fine unsweetened coconut flakes, 2 tbsp (12 g) reserved to sprinkle on top

½ cup (120 ml) whole milk

¼ cup (60 ml) fresh orange juice

Zest of 1 orange

1 tbsp (15 g) tahini paste, for the pan

SYRUP

1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar

1½ cups (360 ml) water

1 tbsp (15 ml) fresh orange juice

1 tsp orange blossom water

Preheat the oven to 375˚F (191˚C). In a bowl, mix the yogurt, 1 cup (200 g) of sugar, baking powder and baking soda. The yogurt will start to bubble and rise. Set that aside while working on the rest of the components.

In another bowl, add the semolina and melted butter. Stir with a rubber spatula until it starts to come together. Then, add in the coconut, along with the yogurt mixture, milk, orange juice and zest.

Gently fold all these ingredients together into a batter and avoid over-stirring.

Coat a loaf pan with the tahini paste thoroughly. This will give a slightly nutty taste, but you can always use nonstick spray. Add the batter to the pan and smooth over the top. Then, gently shake and tap the pan against a surface. This helps avoid air bubbles in the cake. Sprinkle some coconut on top and bake uncovered for 55 minutes until it is baked through.

In the meantime, work on getting the simple syrup together. Combine 1 cup (200 g) of sugar and the water in a pot and let this simmer together for 10 minutes before squeezing in a tablespoon (15 ml) of orange juice. Finish off the syrup with the orange blossom water. Give it a stir and set aside.

Once baked and still warm, poke a few holes with a toothpick and drizzle the simple syrup over the top of the cake slowly, allowing for the cake to absorb the syrup. You do not have to use all the syrup. I recommend using at most three-quarters of it and reserving the rest for serving those who prefer even more sweetness.

Allow the cake to cool completely before taking it out of the loaf pan. This is very important or else there is a risk of the cake crumbling. This can take up to 2 hours. Ideally, you can bake the cake the evening prior and let it cool overnight. Once cooled, use an offset spatula to loosen the edges before removing the cake. Slice gently and enjoy!

Mabrousheh bil Tamer

CRUMB BARS STUFFED WITH DATES

This crumb bar mimics our very popular holiday cookie known as ma'amoul, except this is much simpler to make and just as delicious! Ma'amoul are intricate shortbread cookies stuffed with spiced date paste

and then coated with powdered sugar. These melt-in-your-mouth crumb bars have the same exact effect with a third of the work! We would often make these after Ramadan, as we would always have a surplus of dates.

Makes: 2 dozen

2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
½ cup (100 g) granulated sugar
2 sticks (226 g) unsalted butter, melted
3 cups (375 g) all-purpose flour
1 tbsp (14 g) baking powder
1 tbsp (7 g) ma'amoul spice (see Tip)
26 oz (737 g) date paste
1 tbsp (7 g) anise powder
1 tsp cinnamon
Powdered sugar, for sprinkling on top

First, beat the eggs, vanilla, sugar and butter until the mixture becomes pale yellow in color.

Then, add the flour, baking powder and ma'amoul spice and mix together by hand, rubber spatula or with a paddle attachment.

Reserve half of the dough to be grated for the topping of the bars and the other half as the base. Place the reserved dough for the topping in a ziplock bag or wrap in plastic wrap and place in the freezer for 15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350˚F (177˚C) and lightly grease a 9 × 13—inch (23 × 33—cm) baking pan. Spread out the remaining dough into a thin layer on the bottom of the pan.

In a bowl, mix together the date paste, anise powder and cinnamon.

Between two pieces of plastic wrap, spread out the date paste to fit the size of the baking pan. Place the layer of date paste over the dough base. Grate the dough that was placed in the freezer on top of the date layer covering the date paste. It will have a streusel look.

Bake this uncovered in the oven for 25 minutes on the bottom rack, and then another 10 minutes on the top rack. Broil for a minute to just brown it lightly on top.

Allow this to cool and then sprinkle with powdered sugar and cut into 24 bars. Enjoy with a cup of coffee!

Tip: *If you're unable to find ma'amoul spice, use another ½ tablespoon (4 g) of cinnamon and ½ tablespoon (3 g) of anise instead.*

Roz bil Haleeb

RICE PUDDING

I have had my share of rice pudding growing up, as my mom always had a few bowls of it in the refrigerator for her cravings. There is no one in the family who enjoys sweet treats more than my mother. And let me tell

you; she's phenomenal in the kitchen. This is one of the first desserts that she taught me how to make, as it is so simple and straightforward. Many cultures have different variations for rice pudding. In ours, we add a touch of rose water, which is often used in Middle Eastern desserts. We also always enjoyed this creamy rice pudding with cinnamon on top. Sometimes, my mom would even add raisins, walnuts or coconut shavings for an extra touch!

Servings: 6

4 cups (960 ml) whole milk

2 tbsp (16 g) cornstarch

⅓ cup (66 g) granulated sugar, plus more to preference

½ cup (100 g) white short-grain rice, rinsed and drained

½ tsp rose water

Cinnamon, for sprinkling

2 tbsp (14 g) crushed pistachios

2 tbsp (28 g) crushed walnuts

Add the milk, cornstarch and sugar to a pot and stir over medium heat for 5 to 10 minutes until all the components are well dissolved. Feel free to add more sugar if you prefer a sweeter rice pudding.

At this point, add the rice to the mixture. Stir everything together for 20 minutes over medium-high heat until it starts to thicken and the rice is completely cooked through.

Once this happens, add the rose water and give it a quick stir. Serve the rice pudding in individual serving cups and allow it to cool and thicken some more before garnishing with cinnamon and crushed nuts. This is best enjoyed at room temperature or cold.

Halawa Spiral

TAHINI & MOLASSES PUFF PASTRY SPIRAL

I can't enjoy halawa without thinking of my parents, who are big fans and would eat this candied fudge-like tahini by the tub. I never understood their obsession until my adult years, when I found myself and

my husband doing the exact same—this time indulging in some pistachio halawa. This halawa-stuffed puff pastry spiral is inspired by those memories. Halawa on its own is delicious, but in a buttery puff pastry with honey, sesame seeds and date syrup, it is just divine. Expect a flaky, buttery, perfectly sweet and tahini-forward dessert that will melt in your mouth.

Servings: 6-8

1 (9 × 14-inch [23 × 35-cm]) package puff pastry sheet

1 cup (200 g) pistachio halva

¼ cup (60 ml) honey, divided

¼ cup (36 g) sesame seeds

¼ cup (60 ml) date syrup

Preheat the oven to 350˚F (177˚C). Roll out the puff pastry sheet and thin it out just a tad more by using a roller to create that perfect rectangle.

On the longest side of the puff pastry sheet closest to you, spread out the pistachio halawa in the shape of a log across that side. The halawa can be chopped and simply spread out. Drizzle 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of honey over the halawa filling.

Fold the edge of the dough over the filling to what now looks like an enclosed log. Tighten that roll and keep going until no more pastry is left.

At this point, you are left with a long, thick, log-shaped piece of dough. Thin it out some more by elongating it and rolling it back and forth with the palms of your hands.

Then, create a spiral shape by coiling the log around in a circle. Once you reach the end, try to seal the end so the halawa doesn't ooze out while baking.

Place this on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Glaze the spiral with the remaining honey and scatter sesame seeds evenly on top.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes until the pastry appears golden.

Once out of the oven, drizzle the top with date syrup and enjoy warm or at room temperature! You are in for a sweet treat!

Ashta Fruit Tarts

PHYLLO TARTS TOPPED WITH CREAM, NUTS, BERRIES & HONEY

Ask me what some of my favorite desserts are and I will tell you that most of them include a fruit or two. I always gravitate to fruit tarts whether at a bakery or at a gathering. They are just so fresh and vibrant

and have all the perfect flavors and textures that I crave. This tart is made with phyllo dough, which is heavily used in our cuisine. Every Arab home will almost always have a package of phyllo in the freezer as we use them often in our desserts. Ashta, also known as clotted cream, is the cream used in many Arabic desserts as well. It's so simple to make and absolutely delicious. To sweeten this tart, fresh berries and honey do the trick! It's a delicious and light treat that is super fun to make and beautiful on any tablescape. This is my take on a classic, but with a Middle Eastern touch.

Servings: approximately 12

ASHTA FILLING

1 cup (240 ml) whole milk

1 cup (240 ml) heavy cream

1 tbsp (8 g) all-purpose flour

1 tbsp (8 g) cornstarch

2 tbsp (30 g) granulated sugar

1 tsp orange blossom water

1 tbsp (6 g) orange zest

PHYLLO

5 sheets phyllo dough (#4), defrosted

3 tbsp (42 g) unsalted butter, melted

1 tsp granulated sugar

FOR SERVING

¼ cup (60 ml) honey, for drizzling

Fresh berries (sliced strawberries and blueberries preferred)

¼ cup (25 g) pistachios, chopped

Prepare the ashta first, as it requires an hour to cool. To make the ashta, combine the milk, cream, flour, cornstarch and 2 tablespoons

(30 g) of sugar in a small pot. Stir all the ingredients together very well until there are no lumps.

Then, go ahead and place the pot on the stovetop on medium-high heat. To avoid scorching the mixture, constantly stir the ashta for 15 minutes or so until it begins to bubble and thicken to a creamy texture. Add the orange blossom water and zest and give it a stir.

Place the cream in a shallow dish or pan to cool for 1 hour. Cover the top with plastic wrap to keep a skin from forming as it cools in the refrigerator.

Preheat the oven to 350˚F (177˚C).

Meanwhile, take out the phyllo sheets and cover them with a damp towel as you work so they do not dry out.

On a large, clean surface, place one phyllo sheet and gently spread on some melted butter, either with a pastry brush or your hands, but be sure not to rip the phyllo sheets. They are delicate and this step requires a little bit of patience and a light hand. The idea is to have the sheets lightly glisten with butter but not be drenched.

Top the phyllo sheet with another and keep repeating these steps until you reach the last sheet. Top the last sheet with butter as well. Trim the stacked sheets on all edges with a pizza cutter or knife so that they are all equal.

Cut this into 3 × 3—inch (8 × 8—cm) even squares; then, in a muffin tin that has been lightly buttered, add one square into each muffin mold to create a rustic tart-like look. Repeat with all 12 and then sprinkle each with a little bit of sugar.

Bake for 10 minutes until they are golden brown. Let them cool, and then add a large spoonful of the chilled ashta filling into each tart. Drizzle them with honey and top with the fresh berries and nuts for a refreshing treat!

No-Bake Date Cheesecake

Dates are very common in our cuisine, especially in desserts. These were inspired by the dates I typically stuff with cheese during Ramadan as a treat for my guests. This, however, is more grand and filling. It makes for a beautiful centerpiece on any dessert table. The natural sweetness from

the dates with the creaminess and tanginess of the cheese work really nicely together. This dessert is lightly sweet, and just a thin slice will surely satisfy your cheesecake craving.

Makes: 12 slices

DATE TOPPING

10 Medjool dates, pitted and chopped

½ cup (120 ml) boiling water

½ tsp cinnamon

CRUST

13 oz (368 g) date paste

2 cups (234 g) crushed walnuts

½ tsp cinnamon, plus more to preference

FILLING

1½ cups (360 ml) heavy whipping cream

⅓ cup (40 g) powdered sugar

2 (8-oz [226-g]) cream cheese blocks, room temperature

1 tbsp (15 ml) vanilla extract

2 tsp (5 g) ground cinnamon, plus more to preference

Begin by working on the date topping. Soak the dates in boiling water for 20 minutes. Mash the dates and add a ½ teaspoon of cinnamon. Drain the date purée of excess liquid, and then set it aside.

Meanwhile, place a stainless steel bowl and whisk in the freezer to chill for whipping cream later on to make the filling. I use my stand mixer bowl and whisk attachment.

Next, mix the date paste with the crushed walnuts and a ½ teaspoon of cinnamon until the components come together. Make sure the nuts are well incorporated into the date paste.

Line the bottom of a 10-inch (25-cm) springform baking pan with parchment paper and spray with nonstick spray.

Spread the date walnut crust into the bottom and sides of the baking pan, going about halfway up the edges. Flatten it by using the back of your hand for an even crust.

Place the pan in the refrigerator to chill while working on the filling.

For the filling, start by whipping the cream with the powdered sugar anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes until fluffy peaks are achieved and then set aside. Feel free to add more sugar if you prefer a slightly sweeter dessert.

In the same bowl, whip the cream cheese with the vanilla and 2 teaspoons (5 g) of cinnamon until it is creamy and smooth. Add the whipped cream to this and fold together until you have one cohesive, creamy filling. Taste and add more cinnamon if you like!

Place the filling on top of the crust and smooth evenly with a spatula.

Take the drained date purée and add dollops to the top of the cheesecake; then, using an offset spatula, create swirls to achieve a beautiful, rustic look.

Cover the cheesecake with plastic wrap and keep this in the refrigerator for 24 hours before releasing the cake out of the springform pan, slicing and enjoying a piece!

Feel free to sprinkle a dusting of cinnamon on top if you'd like!

Mhalabia ma' Qamr El-Deen

MILK & APRICOT PUDDING

Mhalabia is our signature milk pudding that is so beloved for many reasons. It is quite simple to make, as it requires minimal ingredients that are typically already in your pantry, and it is just so creamy and

delicious. Often, it is garnished with an array of choices like pistachios, walnuts, raisins, coconut flakes and so on. Here, I am creating a multilayer pudding with qamr el-deen, which is an apricot leather that is soaked, blended and cooked to a pudding consistency. This makes this dessert so refreshing and a favorite of mine because I absolutely love the duo of creamy and fruity.

Servings: 6-8

MILK PUDDING

4 cups (960 ml) whole milk

6 tbsp (48 g) cornstarch

5 tbsp (75 g) granulated sugar

1 tsp orange blossom water

QAMR EL-DEEN PUDDING

3 cups (720 ml) qamr el-deen juice (see recipe for Qamr El-Deen)

5 tbsp (40 g) cornstarch

Zest of an orange

In a pot, combine the milk, 6 tablespoons (48 g) of cornstarch and sugar, whisking everything together until there are no lumps. Then, place on medium heat and stir for 15 minutes until the pudding is slightly thickened. Be sure to continuously stir and not to leave the milk pudding by itself as it will scorch. Add the orange blossom water at this point and stir.

Then, add the pudding into the desired serving glasses and let it cool to room temperature.

For the qamr el-deen pudding, combine the qamr el-deen juice and 5 tablespoons (40 g) of cornstarch in a pot and stir until the cornstarch dissolves.

Place the cornstarch mixture over medium heat and stir for 10 to 15 minutes until it is thickened, and then pour it over the milk

pudding, which should be slightly cooled by then. Top off the pudding in the glass with the orange zest. This will brighten and enhance the apricot flavor.

Let this cool to room temperature and then cover and place in the refrigerator to chill completely before enjoying.

Ka'ek Yansoon ma' Simsim

ANISE SESAME BISCUITS

These are the perfect biscuits to go with a cup of tea, and that's how my mother and I have always enjoyed them. The aromatic flavor of anise with the crunch of the sesame and almond is just delightful.

Makes: approximately 3 dozen

4 eggs
1 cup (240 ml) vegetable oil
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar
2 tbsp (13 g) ground anise
1 tbsp (7 g) fennel seeds
1 tbsp (7 g) anise seeds
1 tsp vinegar
3 cups (375 g) all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
½ cup (72 g) sesame seeds, toasted
1 cup (108 g) sliced almonds

Mix together the eggs, oil, vanilla, sugar, ground anise, fennel, anise seeds, and vinegar. Then add in the flour, baking powder and baking soda. Mix everything. The batter will appear thick, similar to a dense and sticky cake batter.

Grease a 15 × 10—inch (38 × 25—cm) baking pan that has a slight rim to it. Pour the batter smoothly into the pan. Oil your hands and gently press the batter to spread it evenly across the pan. The oil will prevent your hands from sticking to the batter and allow for a smooth finish. Sprinkle the top generously with the sesame seeds and sliced almonds.

Bake at 375°F (191°C) for 30 minutes until the biscuit is lightly browned. Then, let it cool for 15 minutes.

Cut the biscuit into long strips (about seven), and then cut those in half just like biscotti. Then, flip the biscuit to showcase the inside and broil for 2 minutes on each side until it achieves a brown color.

Allow the biscuits to cool to slightly harden, and enjoy with your next cup of tea or coffee!

Classic Drinks

Almost no Palestinian breakfast is complete without Shai ou Na'Na (Fresh Mint Tea). It is even enjoyed after meals as a way to help digest and soothe the gut. You will also find that almost

every dessert is enjoyed with a cup of Qahweh Sadah (Arabic Coffee). That is just the way it is. But I have got to say, the Limoon ou Na'Na (Mint Lemonade) is a classic favorite of mine. It is so tangy and refreshing—quite addictive, especially on those warm days, which you see plenty of in the Middle East.

During Ramadan, Qamr El-Deen is a go-to, as it is sweeter than most drinks and the sugar helps after breaking a long fast. Each drink has its star moment and will be made countless times in your home once you give them a try.

Shai ou Na'Na

FRESH MINT TEA

To say I love shai ou na'na would be an understatement. I drink this tea in large mugs, not dainty teacups, as I adore it so much. It is extremely popular across the Middle East. It is almost always served with breakfast

and often in the evening with dessert or assorted nuts. The mint in the tea is refreshing but also comforting and soothing. You can also use sage, also known as marameeyeh, *in place of mint, which is a typical alternative in the cooler months.*

Servings: 4-6

6 cups (1.4 L) water

5 black tea bags

Handful of fresh mint

Sugar, to preference

Boil the water in a kettle over high heat.

After boiling, add the tea bags and mint to the teapot with the boiled water and let it sit together for 5 minutes before pouring. If you prefer a darker tea, let it steep for a little longer. Add sugar to each cup individually, based on preference. Stir and enjoy while warm.

Qahweh Sadah

ARABIC COFFEE

This is unlike any coffee you have probably tried, as there is no creamer, milk or dairy of any sort served with this. It is meant to be enjoyed black with a little bit of sugar. It has strong flavors of cardamom and is

typically served in small cups similar to espresso, as it is very strong. Often, it is made ahead of time and placed in a thermos to keep warm, and then served at gatherings, especially after dinner.

Servings: 24

5 cups (1.2 L) water

5 tbsp (40 g) ground coffee of choice

1½ tbsp (9 g) ground cardamom

Sugar, optional

Add the water, ground coffee and cardamom to a small pot or open-face kettle and stir a few times on medium-high heat.

When it begins to boil, reduce to a simmer for 5 to 8 minutes.

Using a small colander or sieve, pour the coffee into either a thermos or your desired cups. Serve with sugar as an option for those who would like some sweetness.

Limoon ou Na'Na

MINT LEMONADE

This is such a refreshing drink and a go-to of mine in the warmer months when I have mint growing by the bunches in my garden. Overseas, I would order this beverage at the cafes and relish in the lemon and mint-

forward flavor. It is so perfectly balanced with tartness, freshness and sweetness.

Servings: 6

1 whole lemon, ends cut off, deseeded and cut into small pieces

2 whole lemons, juiced

½ cup (100 g) granulated sugar

1 cup (92 g) fresh mint leaves, packed

2 cups (284 g) crushed ice

4 cups (960 ml) cold water

In a blender, combine the whole lemon, lemon juice, sugar, mint leaves, ice and water and blend for 1 to 2 minutes.

Sift the drink through a mesh sieve to catch any residual lemon zest, seeds or larger pieces of mint. Press down with a spoon as you strain it.

Pour the Limoon ou Na'Na in your desired cups or a pitcher and enjoy this refreshing, cold drink!

Qamr El-Deen

APRICOT BEVERAGE

During Ramadan, you will almost always find this beverage, as it is refreshing and sweet, which is needed after a long day's fast. It tastes just as vibrant as it looks.

Servings: 4

1 (14-oz [400-g]) package apricot leather

3 cups (720 ml) water

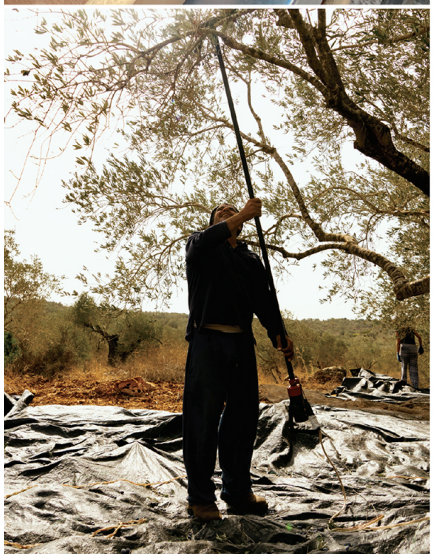
Juice of ½ orange

Cut the apricot leather into squares, and then place them in a bowl with 3 cups (720 ml) of water to dissolve overnight.

Blend together the water and dissolved fruit leather the following day and enjoy over some ice with fresh orange juice to brighten it up. The apricot leather itself is pretty sweet, so there isn't a need to add sugar unless you'd like it sweeter.

Hot
Chilli
Black

25 كيلو



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To you, reading this now: Thank you for buying my book. I hope it's everything you wanted. It has been such an honor to share a part of me with you.

I truly am grateful for each and every one of you.

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About the Author

Heifa Odeh is an award-winning first generation Palestinian—American food blogger. In November 2019, she was recognized among thousands of participants worldwide to have the best food

culture blog by *Saveur* magazine. Her focus has always been to celebrate and preserve her Palestinian heritage through the food she grew up eating. She believes in sharing these recipes in the most approachable manner so that others feel confident creating them. She also uses the platform she built to give back to the community by hosting yearly charity events and fundraisers. Her hope is to spread the beauty of Palestinian cuisine. She lives in Chicago, Illinois, with her family.

You can continue cooking alongside Heifa by following her blog, fufuskitchen.com, and finding her on Instagram @fufuinthekitchen.

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Coconut flakes, in Hareesa (Semolina Orange Blossom Coconut Cake)
Cod, Cumin-Spiced (Sayadieh)
Coffee
Chocolate Almond Baklawa
Qahweh Sadah (Arabic Coffee)
Cookies, Pistachio & Cardamom Shortbread Cookies (Ghraybeh)
Cream cheese
Khaliat al Nahl (Honeycomb Bread Stuffed with Cheese)
No-Bake Date Cheesecake
Sabanekh ou Jibneh Sambousak (Spinach & Cheese Rolls)
Crumb Bars Stuffed with Dates (Mabrousheh bil Tamer)
Cucumbers, in Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)
Cumin-Spiced Cod with Caramelized Onions & Rice

D

Da'ah (Jalapeño Salsa)
Dajaj Mahshi bil Freekeh (Chicken Stuffed with Freekeh)
Dates/date paste
Mabrousheh bil Tamer (Crumb Bars Stuffed with Dates)
No-Bake Date Cheesecake
Date syrup, in Halawa Spiral (Tahini & Molasses Puff Pastry Spiral)

Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef)
Dips
  Ful (Fava Bean Dip)
  Mutabal with Seasoned Pita Chips (Roasted Eggplant Dip)
  Muthawamet Kousa (Zucchini, Garlic & Yogurt Dip)
  Tahini Dip
Dumplings, Sweet (Awameh)

E

Eggplant(s)
  Baitinjan Maklee ma' Da'ah (Fried Eggplant with Salsa)
  Imsaka'a bil Khodra (Vegetarian Moussaka)
  Makloubeh bil Khodra (Vegetarian “Upside Down” Spiced Rice Dish)
  Mutabal with Seasoned Pita Chips (Roasted Eggplant Dip)
Egg roll wraps, in Sabanekh ou Jibneh Sambousak (Spinach & Cheese Rolls)
Eggs
  Bayd ou Batata (Eggs & Potatoes)
  Ijjeh (Fluffy Egg & Veggie Fritters)
  Imshat (Cauliflower Fritters)
Espresso powder, in Fudgy Pomegranate Brownies with Tahini Swirl

F

Fasulya bil Zeit (Green Beans in Olive Oil)
Fattet Hummus (Traditional Layered Hummus)
Feta cheese
  Khaliat al Nahl (Honeycomb Bread Stuffed with Cheese)
  Sabanekh ou Jibneh Sambousak (Spinach & Cheese Rolls)
Figs/fig jam, in Fig & Honey Pistachio Cake
Fish and seafood

Jumbari bil Sumac ma' Batata Harra (Sumac-Spiced Shrimp with Spicy Potatoes)
Pomegranate Molasses & Harissa Salmon with Arugula Salad
Sayadieh (Cumin-Spiced Cod with Caramelized Onions & Rice)
Za'atar-Spiced Tilapia with Lentil Salad
Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol (Stuffed Peppers with Bulgur & Herb Yogurt)
Flatbread, Musakhan served with
Foul mudammas, in Ful (Fava Bean Dip)
Freekeh
Dajaj Mahshi bil Freekeh (Chicken Stuffed with Freekeh)
Salatat Freekeh (Freekeh Salad)
Fritters
Fluffy Egg & Veggie Fritters (Ijjeh)
Imshat (Cauliflower Fritters)
Fruit Tarts, Ashta (Phyllo Tarts Topped with Cream, Nuts, Berries & Honey) 136–138
Ful (Fava Bean Dip)

G

Ghee
Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice
Fattet Hummus (Traditional Layered Hummus)
Knafeh (Sweet Cheese Pastry)
Ghraybeh (Pistachio & Cardamom Shortbread Cookies)
Grape leaves, in Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef)
Green beans, in Fasulya bil Zeit (Green Beans in Olive Oil), 55
Ground beef
Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef)
Kousa Mahshi (Stuffed Zucchini in Tomato Sauce)
Macarona bil Lahmeh (Pasta with Yogurt & Minced Meat)

Shish Barak (Beef Dumplings in Tangy Yogurt Sauce)
Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)

H

Halawa Spiral (Tahini & Molasses Puff Pastry Spiral)
Halloumi
Sabanekh ou Jibneh Sambousak (Spinach & Cheese Rolls)
Za'atar Cake with Olives & Halloumi
Halva (pistachio), in Halawa Spiral (Tahini & Molasses Puff Pastry Spiral)
Hareesa (Semolina Orange Blossom Coconut Cake)
Harissa paste
Jumbari bil Sumac ma' Batata Harra (Sumac-Spiced Shrimp with Spicy Potatoes)
Pomegranate Molasses & Harissa Salmon with Arugula Salad
Heavy cream
Ashta Fruit Tarts (Phyllo Tarts Topped with Cream, Nuts, Berries & Honey)
Booza Arabiya (Arabic Ice Cream Pinwheels)
No-Bake Date Cheesecake
Warbat (Cream-Stuffed Phyllo Triangles)
Herb Yogurt, Stuffed Peppers with Bulgur (Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol)
Honey
Ashta Fruit Tarts (Phyllo Tarts Topped with Cream, Nuts, Berries & Honey)
Fig & Honey Pistachio Cake
Halawa Spiral (Tahini & Molasses Puff Pastry Spiral)
Khaliat al Nahl (Honeycomb Bread Stuffed with Cheese)
Hummus
Fattet Hummus (Traditional Layered Hummus)

Hummus bi' Lahmeh (Hummus Topped with Steak)

I

Ice Cream Pinwheels (Booza Arabiya)
Ijjeh (Fluffy Egg & Veggie Fritters)
Imsaka'a bil Khodra (Vegetarian Moussaka)
Imshat (Cauliflower Fritters)
Instant coffee, in Chocolate Almond Baklawa

J

Jalapeño
Baitinjan Maklee ma' Da'ah (Fried Eggplant with Salsa)
Fasulya bil Zeit (Green Beans in Olive Oil)
Fattet Hummus (Traditional Layered Hummus)
Ful (Fava Bean Dip)
Ijjeh (Fluffy Egg & Veggie Fritters)
Imsaka'a bil Khodra (Vegetarian Moussaka)
Muthawamet Kousa (Zucchini, Garlic & Yogurt Dip)
Qalayet Bandura (Tomato Garlic Skillet)
Salata Baladia (Tomato & Onion Tahini Salad)
Za'atar-Spiced Tilapia with Lentil Salad
Jerusalem Salad
Dajaj Mahshi bil Freekeh served with
Makloubeh bil Khodra served with
Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds
Jerusalem Sesame Bread (Ka'ek El Quds)
Jumbari bil Sumac ma' Batata Harra (Sumac-Spiced Shrimp with Spicy Potatoes)

K

Ka'ek El Quds (Jerusalem Sesame Bread)

Ka'ek Yansoon ma' Simsim (Anise Sesame Biscuits)
Kataifi dough, in Knafeh (Sweet Cheese Pastry)
Knafeh (Sweet Cheese Pastry)
Kousa Mahshi (Stuffed Zucchini in Tomato Sauce)

L

Labneh Imdahbar (Yogurt Balls Preserved in Olive Oil)
Lamb
- Bamya (Okra Stew with Lamb & Vermicelli Rice)
- Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice

Lemon(s)
- Arnabeet (Cauliflower Bites with Tahini Sauce)
- Baitinjan Maklee ma' Da'ah (Fried Eggplant with Salsa)
- Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice
- Dajaj Mahshi bil Freekeh (Chicken Stuffed with Freekeh)
- Fattet Hummus (Traditional Layered Hummus)
- Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol (Stuffed Peppers with Bulgur & Herb Yogurt)
- Ful (Fava Bean Dip)
- Hummus bi' Lahmeh (Hummus Topped with Steak)
- Jumbari bil Sumac ma' Batata Harra (Sumac-Spiced Shrimp with Spicy Potatoes)
- Limoon ou Na'Na (Mint Lemonade)
- Musakhan (Roasted Chicken & Flatbread with Sumac, Olive Oil & Onions)
- Mutabal with Seasoned Pita Chips (Roasted Eggplant Dip)
- Muthawamet Kousa (Zucchini, Garlic & Yogurt Dip)
- Salata Baladia (Tomato & Onion Tahini Salad)
- Sayadieh (Cumin-Spiced Cod with Caramelized Onions & Rice)
- Shawarmat Dajaj (Chicken Shawarma)
- Sneeyet Dajaj ou Batata (Roasted Chicken with Za'atar Potatoes)

Za'atar-Spiced Tilapia with Lentil Salad
Lentil Salad, Za'atar-Spiced Tilapia with
Limoon ou Na'Na (Mint Lemonade)

M

Ma'amoul spice, in Mabrousheh bil Tamer (Crumb Bars Stuffed with Dates)
Mabrousheh bil Tamer (Crumb Bars Stuffed with Dates)
Macarona bil Lahmeh (Pasta with Yogurt & Minced Meat)
Makloubeh bil Khodra (Vegetarian “Upside Down” Spiced Rice Dish)
Mastic, in Booza Arabiya (Arabic Ice Cream Pinwheels)
Medjool dates, in No-Bake Date Cheesecake
Mhalabia ma' Qamr El-Deen (Milk & Apricot Pudding)
Mint (dried)
Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol (Stuffed Peppers with Bulgur & Herb Yogurt)
Labneh Imdahbar (Yogurt Balls Preserved in Olive Oil)
Macarona bil Lahmeh (Pasta with Yogurt & Minced Meat)
Muthawamet Kousa (Zucchini, Garlic & Yogurt Dip)
Pomegranate Molasses & Harissa Salmon with Arugula Salad
Salatat Freekeh (Freekeh Salad) dressing
Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)
Tabbouleh (Parsley & Bulgur Salad)
Mint (fresh)
Limoon ou Na'Na (Mint Lemonade)
Shai ou Na'Na (Fresh Mint Tea)
Moussaka, Vegetarian
Mozzarella cheese, in Knafeh (Sweet Cheese Pastry)
Musakhan (Roasted Chicken & Flatbread with Sumac, Olive Oil & Onions)

Mutabal with Seasoned Pita Chips (Roasted Eggplant Dip)
Muthawamet Kousa (Zucchini, Garlic & Yogurt Dip)

N

Naan, Musakhan served with
No-Bake Date Cheesecake

O

Okra Stew with Lamb & Vermicelli Rice (Bamya)
Onion
- Bamya (Okra Stew with Lamb & Vermicelli Rice)
- Bayd ou Batata (Eggs & Potatoes)
- Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice
- Dajaj Mahshi bil Freekeh (Chicken Stuffed with Freekeh)
- Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef)
- Fasulya bil Zeit (Green Beans in Olive Oil)
- Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol (Stuffed Peppers with Bulgur & Herb Yogurt)
- Ijjeh (Fluffy Egg & Veggie Fritters)
- Imsaka'a bil Khodra (Vegetarian Moussaka)
- Imshat (Cauliflower Fritters)
- Kousa Mahshi (Stuffed Zucchini in Tomato Sauce)
- Musakhan (Roasted Chicken & Flatbread with Sumac, Olive Oil & Onions)
- Pomegranate Molasses & Harissa Salmon with Arugula Salad
- Salata Baladia (Tomato & Onion Tahini Salad)
- Salatat Freekeh (Freekeh Salad)
- Sayadieh (Cumin-Spiced Cod with Caramelized Onions & Rice)
- Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)
- Sneeyet Lahmeh ou Khodra (Oven-Baked Beef & Veggies)

Tabeekh Sabanekh (Spinach Stew)
Orange blossom water
Ashta Fruit Tarts (Phyllo Tarts Topped with Cream, Nuts, Berries & Honey)
Awameh (Sweet Dumplings)
Ghraybeh (Pistachio & Cardamom Shortbread Cookies)
Hareesa (Semolina Orange Blossom Coconut Cake)
Mhalabia ma' Qamr El-Deen (Milk & Apricot Pudding)
Warbat (Cream-Stuffed Phyllo Triangles)
Orange/orange juice/orange zest Ashta Fruit Tarts (Phyllo Tarts Topped with Cream, Nuts, Berries & Honey)
Hareesa (Semolina Orange Blossom Coconut Cake)
Mhalabia ma' Qamr El-Deen (Milk & Apricot Pudding)
Qamr El-Deen (Apricot Beverage)

P

Parsley
Bayd ou Batata (Eggs & Potatoes)
Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef)
Fattet Hummus (Traditional Layered Hummus)
Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol (Stuffed Peppers with Bulgur & Herb Yogurt)
Hummus bi' Lahmeh (Hummus Topped with Steak)
Ijjeh (Fluffy Egg & Veggie Fritters)
Imshat (Cauliflower Fritters)
Jumbari bil Sumac ma' Batata Harra (Sumac-Spiced Shrimp with Spicy Potatoes)
Makloubeh bil Khodra (Vegetarian “Upside Down” Spiced Rice Dish)
Mutabal with Seasoned Pita Chips (Roasted Eggplant Dip)
Salatat Freekeh (Freekeh Salad)

- Sayadieh (Cumin-Spiced Cod with Caramelized Onions & Rice)
- Shish Barak (Beef Dumplings in Tangy Yogurt Sauce)
- Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)
- Tabbouleh (Parsley & Bulgur Salad)
- Za'atar-Spiced Tilapia with Lentil Salad

Pasta with Yogurt & Minced Meat (Macarona bil Lahmeh)

Phyllo dough

- Ashta Fruit Tarts (Phyllo Tarts Topped with Cream, Nuts, Berries & Honey)
- Chocolate Almond Baklawa
- Warbat (Cream-Stuffed Phyllo Triangles)

Pine nuts

- Arnabeet (Cauliflower Bites with Tahini Sauce)
- Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice
- Fattet Hummus (Traditional Layered Hummus)
- Hummus bi' Lahmeh (Hummus Topped with Steak)
- Macarona bil Lahmeh (Pasta with Yogurt & Minced Meat)
- Shish Barak (Beef Dumplings in Tangy Yogurt Sauce)

Pistachio halva, in Halawa Spiral (Tahini & Molasses Puff Pastry Spiral)

Pistachios

- Ashta Fruit Tarts (Phyllo Tarts Topped with Cream, Nuts, Berries & Honey)
- Booza Arabiya (Arabic Ice Cream Pinwheels)
- Fig & Honey Pistachio Cake
- Ghraybeh (Pistachio & Cardamom Shortbread Cookies)
- Knafeh (Sweet Cheese Pastry)
- Roz bil Haleeb (Rice Pudding)
- Warbat (Cream-Stuffed Phyllo Triangles)

Pita bread

Fasulya bil Zeit with
Hummus bi' Lahmeh with
Imsaka'a bil Khodra served with
Muthawamet Kousa with
Qalayet Bandura served with
Sneeyet Dajaj ou Batata served with
Pita chips
Fattet Hummus with
Mutabal with
Pomegranate molasses Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef)
Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol (Stuffed Peppers with Bulgur & Herb Yogurt)
Fudgy Pomegranate Brownies with Tahini Swirl
Ka'ek El Quds (Jerusalem Sesame Bread)
Pomegranate Molasses & Harissa Salmon with Arugula Salad
Salatat Freekeh (Freekeh Salad)
Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)
Potatoes
Bayd ou Batata (Eggs & Potatoes)
Jumbari bil Sumac ma' Batata Harra (Sumac-Spiced Shrimp with Spicy Potatoes)
Makloubeh bil Khodra (Vegetarian “Upside Down” Spiced Rice Dish)
Sneeyet Dajaj ou Batata (Roasted Chicken with Za'atar Potatoes)
Sneeyet Lahmeh ou Khodra (Oven-Baked Beef & Veggies)
Pudding, Milk & Apricot
Puff pastry, in Halawa Spiral

Q

Qahweh Sadah (Arabic Coffee)

Qamr El-Deen
Mhalabia ma' Qamr El-Deen (Milk & Apricot Pudding) recipe

R

Raisins, in Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice
Rice
Bamya (Okra Stew with Lamb & Vermicelli Rice)
Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice
Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef)
Fasulya bil Zeit (Green Beans in Olive Oil) with
Kousa Mahshi (Stuffed Zucchini in Tomato Sauce)
Makloubeh bil Khodra (Vegetarian “Upside Down” Spiced Rice Dish)
Roz bil Haleeb (Rice Pudding)
Sayadieh (Cumin-Spiced Cod with Caramelized Onions & Rice)
Rice Pudding (Roz bil Haleeb)
Rose water
Booza Arabiya (Arabic Ice Cream Pinwheels)
Roz bil Haleeb (Rice Pudding)
Roz bil Haleeb (Rice Pudding)

S

Sabanekh ou Jibneh Sambousak (Spinach & Cheese Rolls)
Sahlep powder, Booza Arabiya (Arabic Ice Cream Pinwheels)
Salads
Salata Baladia (Tomato & Onion Tahini Salad)
Salatat Freekeh (Freekeh Salad)
Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)
Tabbouleh (Parsley & Bulgur Salad)

Salmon, Pomegranate Molasses & Harissa
Salsa, Fried Eggplant with (Baitinjan Maklee ma' Da'ah)
Sayadieh (Cumin-Spiced Cod with Caramelized Onions & Rice)
Semolina, in Hareesa (Semolina Orange Blossom Coconut Cake)
Sesame seeds
  Halawa Spiral (Tahini & Molasses Puff Pastry Spiral)
  Ka'ek El Quds (Jerusalem Sesame Bread)
  Ka'ek Yansoon ma' Simsim (Anise Sesame Biscuits)
  Khaliat al Nahl (Honeycomb Bread Stuffed with Cheese)
  Za'atar Cake with Olives & Halloumi
Shatta (chili paste)
  Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice
  Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef)
  Jumbari bil Sumac ma' Batata Harra (Sumac-Spiced Shrimp with Spicy Potatoes)
  Kousa Mahshi (Stuffed Zucchini in Tomato Sauce)
  Sneeyet Dajaj ou Batata (Roasted Chicken with Za'atar Potatoes)
  Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)
Shawarmat Dajaj (Chicken Shawarma)
Shish Barak (Beef Dumplings in Tangy Yogurt Sauce)
Shrimp, Sumac-Spiced (Jumbari bil Sumac ma' Batata Harra)
Sneeyet Dajaj ou Batata (Roasted Chicken with Za'atar Potatoes)
Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)
Sneeyet Lahmeh ou Khodra (Oven-Baked Beef & Veggies)
Sour cream, in Fig & Honey Pistachio Cake
Spaghetti, in Macarona bil Lahmeh (Pasta with Yogurt & Minced Meat)
Spinach
  Sabanekh ou Jibneh Sambousak (Spinach & Cheese Rolls)
  Tabeekh Sabanekh (Spinach Stew)

Sumac
- Arnabeet (Cauliflower Bites with Tahini Sauce)
- Fattet Hummus (Traditional Layered Hummus)
- Jumbari bil Sumac ma' Batata Harra (Sumac-Spiced Shrimp with Spicy Potatoes)
- Musakhan (Roasted Chicken & Flatbread with Sumac, Olive Oil & Onions)
- Mutabal with Seasoned Pita Chips (Roasted Eggplant Dip)
- Pomegranate Molasses & Harissa Salmon with Arugula Salad
- Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)

Sweet Dumplings (Awameh)

Sweetened condensed milk, in Booza Arabiya (Arabic Ice Cream Pinwheels)

T

Tabbouleh (Parsley & Bulgur Salad)

Tabeekh Sabanekh (Spinach Stew)

Taboon bread, Musakhan served with

Tahini paste
- Arnabeet (Cauliflower Bites with Tahini Sauce)
- Fattet Hummus (Traditional Layered Hummus)
- Fudgy Pomegranate Brownies with Tahini Swirl
- Ful (Fava Bean Dip)
- Hareesa (Semolina Orange Blossom Coconut Cake)
- Hummus bi' Lahmeh (Hummus Topped with Steak)
- Mutabal with Seasoned Pita Chips (Roasted Eggplant Dip)
- Muthawamet Kousa (Zucchini, Garlic & Yogurt Dip)
- Salata Baladia (Tomato & Onion Tahini Salad)
- Sayadieh (Cumin-Spiced Cod with Caramelized Onions & Rice)

Tea, Fresh Mint (Shai ou Na'Na)

Tilapia, Za'atar-Spiced
Tomatoes
- Bamya (Okra Stew with Lamb & Vermicelli Rice)
- Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef)
- Fasulya bil Zeit (Green Beans in Olive Oil)
- Imsaka'a bil Khodra (Vegetarian Moussaka)
- Kousa Mahshi (Stuffed Zucchini in Tomato Sauce)
- Makloubeh bil Khodra (Vegetarian “Upside Down” Spiced Rice Dish)
- Qalayet Bandura (Tomato Garlic Skillet)
- Salata Baladia (Tomato & Onion Tahini Salad)
- Sayadieh (Cumin-Spiced Cod with Caramelized Onions & Rice)
- Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)
- Sneeyet Lahmeh ou Khodra (Oven-Baked Beef & Veggies)
- Tabbouleh (Parsley & Bulgur Salad)
- Za'atar-Spiced Tilapia with Lentil Salad

Tomatoes (canned)
- Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice
- Imsaka'a bil Khodra (Vegetarian Moussaka)

Tomato paste
- Bamya (Okra Stew with Lamb & Vermicelli Rice)
- Braised Lamb Shanks with Turmeric Rice
- Dajaj Mahshi bil Freekeh (Chicken Stuffed with Freekeh)
- Dawali (Stuffed Grape Leaves with Beef)
- Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol (Stuffed Peppers with Bulgur & Herb Yogurt)
- Kousa Mahshi (Stuffed Zucchini in Tomato Sauce)
- Sneeyet Dajaj ou Batata (Roasted Chicken with Za'atar Potatoes)
- Sneeyet Kufta ma' Salatat El Quds (Kufta Tart with Jerusalem Salad)

Turmeric Rice, Braised Lamb Shanks with

V

Vermicelli noodles, in Bamya (Okra Stew with Lamb & Vermicelli Rice)
Vermicelli Rice
Bamya (Okra Stew with Lamb & Vermicelli Rice)
Imsaka'a bil Khodra served with
Shish Barak served with
Sneeyet Dajaj ou Batata served with
Tabeekh Sabanekh served with

W

Walnuts
No-Bake Date Cheesecake
Pomegranate Molasses & Harissa Salmon with Arugula Salad
Roz bil Haleeb (Rice Pudding)
Warbat (Cream-Stuffed Phyllo Triangles)

Y

Yogurt
Fattet Hummus (Traditional Layered Hummus)
Flafleh Mahshi bil Burghol (Stuffed Peppers with Bulgur & Herb Yogurt)
Hareesa (Semolina Orange Blossom Coconut Cake)
Kousa Mahshi (Stuffed Zucchini in Tomato Sauce)
Macarona bil Lahmeh (Pasta with Yogurt & Minced Meat)
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Muthawamet Kousa (Zucchini, Garlic & Yogurt Dip)
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Yogurt Balls (Labneh Imdahbar)

Z

Za'atar seasoning Labneh Imdahbar (Yogurt Balls Preserved in Olive Oil)
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Qahweh Sadah (Arabic Coffee)
Limoon ou Na'Na (Mint Lemonade)
Qamr El-Deen (Apricot Beverage)

Acknowledgments
About the Authors

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